

DERNIS HONKS

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Hanks Family

Dennis Hanks

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER
CONTAINING IMPORTANT DATA CONCERNING THE HANKS FAMILY, BY DENNIS F. HANKS
Written for William H. HERNDON,
And Preserved in the Library of the University of Chicago.

April the 2nd, 1866

Dennis F. Hanks was born in Hardin County on the tributary branch of the South Fork of Nolin on the old Richard Creal farm in the old peach orchard in a Log Cabin 3 miles from HogsVill thence we moved to Mercer County and staid there a Bout 3 years and moved Back again to the same place and there Remained untill we moved to Spencer County Indiana this was I think in the year 1816 if my memory serves me Rite.

My mother ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{mother} and Abe's mother ^{mother} was sisters. My mother's name was Nancy Hanks. Abe's grandmother was Lucy Hanks, which was my mother's sister. the woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparrow, the sister of Lucy and Nancy the other sister hir name was polly Friend So you see there was 4 sisters that was Hankses.

I have no letter from my friends yet I Dont no the Reason Billy did you write to William Hall in Missouri, Frankford. I think he could tell you something that would Be Rite. He is my half Brother try him.

William I have seen a Book which states that Lincoln was a quaker. I say this is mistake. They was Baptist All this talk about their Religious talk is a humbug. they try to make them out Puritans this is not the case.

You asked me what sort of songs or Intress Abe tuck part in I will say this anything that was Lively. He never would sing any Religious songs. it appeared to me that it did not souit him But for a man to preach a Sermond he would lissin to with great Attention.

Did you find out from Richard Creal if he lived on the plave where A Lincoln ^{was} Born or not I am going there in May to visit my Birthplace the 15th this is my Birth Day 1799 it has been 68 years sence

Anything you want to No Let it Come

Your friend

D.F.HANKS

My first School Master was By the Name Warden taught school at the old Baptist Church on Nolin nere Brunks farm at the Big Spring Down in a Deep Hollow Close By the House.

the Government; that they must be controlled by military law, or by laws passed by Congress, in which they had no voice, which should be enforced if necessary by the bayonet; that Congress should arrogate to itself the right to say who should be the electors of their States, taking away from them one of the safeguards thrown around them by the Constitution, and openly violating that instrument we have all been taught to revere, and placing them in the condition of conquered provinces; that if the Union element of the South had believed, that this was the treatment they were to receive at the hands of the authorities of the Government, I doubt whether the rebellion in arms would have at this day been put down. Had they thus believed, *en masse*, it would have united the South, much as they detested secession and its leaders, and not that they loved the government of their fathers less, but knowing that the pure principles of the government were gone, usurped by a party for their extermination or complete vassalage. Their sense of honor, knowing these things, would have made them strike to free themselves from the impending danger or perish in the attempt. But they could not believe that this could be their fate, and I would yet hope that the prospect of the future of our government was not so dark as it seems. I believe as you do, that unless there is a great change we are to have more war. In the last struggle, from which we are just emerging, what was prophecy with me the events of the war have made history. The institution of slavery is forever gone, and the South did more, by the act of cutting loose from the old government, to liberate the slaves, than the abolition party, as it then existed, could have done in a century. But when they cut loose from the old government, and attempted to make a government of their own, under a different constitution and a different flag, the conservative party North, who were the constitutional friends of the South, were forced by their love of the old government to join with their former political enemies, and take up arms against their former political friends. You know as well as I do that there was an element, and a controlling one, in the North, that would have stood by the South in every constitutional right, but when the South seceded, they were forsaken by their former political friends North, and when they did this, and affiliated with the Republican party, they did it with high and patriotic motives, the preservation of the Union. They lost sight of party for the time being, their great object being the suppression of the rebellion. Not so with the Republican party; but taking advantage of the political situation, placed in office men of their political creed, and hence this trouble.

It seems that the irrepressible conflict has not ended with the abolition of slavery. The events of the war have freed the former slave, and none concede the fact more readily than the South. Slavery was the leading feature that caused the rebellion. The South fought under their interpretation of the Constitution, and lost, and are now willing to accept the Constitution as it was interpreted by the North. We think the Republican party has made rapid advance by securing the abolition of slavery in so short a time, and principally by the blindness of its defenders. But they, now frenzied by their rapid advance, seek to place the former slave equal politically, if not superior, to his former master. To this we most respectfully demur. The South grants to the former slave equal rights in person and property before the law, and in the course of time, should he prove worthy, will grant equal political rights; but the party that is now in power are using the same measures that Yancey used in bringing on the rebellion, "precipitation," and insist on the enfranchisement of the blacks as a requisite to restoration. In their excessive zeal for the negro, they may beget a storm that will sweep from him what benefits may have accrued from the late war, for if we have more war it will not be sectional as it was before, notwithstanding the earnest effort of Gov. Brownlow to again embitter the North against the South; but it will be on Northern soil, between Northern men, as well as upon Southern soil, and I fear that in the South it will be between the black and white race; and should it ever commence, which I pray God it may never do, it will result in the extermination of the one or the other. Do not think me wild or unduly excited in the

hopes of clear weather yet, which, if realized, may induce the managers to prolong the fair a day beyond that announced for the close.

EISMAR.

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR.

Special Correspondence of The Detroit Free Press.
ANN ARBOR, Oct. 9.

The violence of the rains two weeks since induced the officers of the Agricultural Society to postpone until this week the annual show, and it opened this morning with fair promise of success. The entries in the various departments fully equal those of former years, and should the weather continue propitious a good time will be had.

The grounds have been much improved by the moving of buildings and the erection of new ones, the planting out of shrubbery, and grading the track anew. Those in charge of affairs have exerted themselves to make it a success, and are co-operated with by the agricultural, horticultural and mechanical community.

To-morrow, when the show is fairly inaugurated, I will endeavor to send you full notes of the entries, together with incidents of the exhibition.

H.

BOYS IN BLUE.

NORTH BRANCH, Oct. 8, 1866.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press.

Add the following names to the list of Boys in Blue that have stood up for the Government and Constitution, and a speedy representation of all States of the Union in Congress:

Isaiah Butler, Cavalry Brigade; Henry Gallinger, do; Malvin Lyman, do; Almond Wood, do; James Basa, 7th Mich. Vol; John Siacian, 11th Mich. Cav; William Spencer, 1st Mich. Cav; Allen Jackson, 10th do; W. Began, 1st Cav. Cavalry Brigade; E. Stover, 21st Mich. Infantry; George Clark, 12th do; Harrison Spencer, 10th do; Robert Hunt, do; Thasron Spencer, 4th Mich. Cav.; William P. Thrasher, do; Stephen Spencer, 13th Mich. Infantry; James Niles, 1st Mechanics and Engineers; Edgar Salasorg, 1st Mich. Infantry; William Bark, 15th do; Almond Manso, 1st Cav.; John Lomels, 10th Mich. Infantry; Matthew Hodges, Lieutenant do; Mick Finkle, 22nd do; E. Stover, do do.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION.

The Democratic Representative Convention for the Fourth Representative District of Lenawee county met, according to notice, at Rome Centre on the 9th instant, the meeting being organized by electing Henry Panches, chairman, and L. W. Baker, secretary.

On motion, it was voted that a committee be appointed by the Chair on credentials; J. H. Bates, Abraham Lerch and R. P. Baker composed said committee. The committee reported the following persons entitled to seats in the Convention:

Dover—Wm. Shafer, Gardner Robb, Henry Panches, Abraham Lerch, David Bordine. Rome—J. H. Bates, R. P. Baker, Martin Poucher; L. W. Baker, Judson Besch. Madison—Bowman Seger; 1st Ward, J. B. Decker, John W. Beaud; 4th Ward, J. C. Bates, N. Myers.

On motion, it was voted that each town and ward not fully represented should cast the full number of votes.

It was voted to proceed to an informal ballot for a candidate for representative of the 4th District. The ballot stood for Willis T. Lawrence twenty-five, which was a unanimous vote of the whole delegates. Willis T. Lawrence was declared unanimously nominated as a candidate for representative of the 4th District.

The Chair appointed J. H. Bates, Abraham Lerch and Philo Robinson a District Committee for two years. It was voted that the proceedings be printed in THE FREE PRESS.

GEN. TOM EWING ON THE RADICALS.

He Challenges Them to Produce One Word of Mr. Lincoln's in Support of Their Present Policy.

LINCOLN'S POLICY.

Letter from a Relative of the Deceased President.

From the Springfield (Ill.) Register, Oct. 4.
The annexed letter needs no comment. It speaks volumes. Let the country read it. If President Lincoln had lived, we have the assurance of this intimate friend of that honorable man that President Johnson's policy, as enunciated by him, would ere this have been carried into practical effect by Mr. Lincoln.
Coming from one who was the preceptor of the lamented dead—from his relative—from one recognized as his particular friend, this testimony is invaluable. We commend every word of it to the calm, sober, thoughtful attention of intelligent Republicans:

DECATUR, Ill., Oct. 2, 1866.

ED. STATE REGISTER.—For the past five years there has been no warmer supporter of the administration of Abraham Lincoln than myself. My support of him was to some extent controlled by my knowledge of him. I have known him from his infancy, and was intimately associated with him during his whole career, up to the day of his death. In his school-boy days I was his teacher; and when President, he recognized me as his friend, and as his relation. Knowing him thus intimately, it is but natural that I should know something of his intentions in regard to his sentiment on the grave questions that were submitted to his control. His whole presidential career was a continued struggle against the recklessness of the radical faction, led by Wade, Butler, Phillips, Greeley, Fred. Douglas, and their confederates, and whenever any movement was inaugurated that promised a speedy overthrow of the rebellion, the radical class imposed upon him conditions before they would pledge their support, or the support of their representatives in Congress, that compelled him either to sacrifice the country or to yield to their demands. I have private evidence that he was in this way compelled to inaugurate policies that were repugnant to the dictates both of his judgment and his heart. Unfortunately for the country, at the hour when his power was complete, when he did not require their aid to accomplish the restoration of peace, the hand of an assassin removed him, and prevented him from accomplishing that good he intended.

Mr. Lincoln was well beloved by the people. Had he lived, the Southern States would by this time have been represented in Congress. The radical curs would have barked at his heels, and the whole people would have had confidence in his purity and judgment.

President Johnson's policy, as now enunciated by him, would, ere this, have been carried into practical effect by Mr. Lincoln; not because Mr. Lincoln was a greater or a purer man than President Johnson, but because the people had, during the gloomy years of the dreadful struggle through which we had been passing, reposed confidence in his judgment and his honesty, and the factious partisan lash could not have destroyed his power with the people. I hope that every honest supporter of President Lincoln—every man who fought in the field or who battled at home in behalf of this glorious Union of ours—will not only cast their ballots, but will as well exert all their influence against the miserable combination of fanatics, charlatans and plunderers, who, under the name of Union radical party, are now attempting to rob Mr. Lincoln of his good name and our country of liberty.

Yours truly,

DENNIS F. HANKS.

Another Radical Outrage on Unionists—Democratic Soldiers Turned Out of a "Soldiers' Home."

From the Philadelphia Evening Herald, October 2.
Long as we have been in the newspaper world we have never been called on to narrate a more heartless outrage than, it is alleged, has been perpetrated by the managers of the Soldiers' Home at Sixteenth and Filbert streets, this morning. A fine home it is, as our readers know! The "Home" is intended for the benefit of men who have fought in the service of the country, and have been so badly injured in the storm of battle as to be totally unfitted for the pursuits of peaceful life. They are men who have chosen their loyalty, and when

Beauregard atween t

A correspondent writing from New Orleans, says:

"General Beauregard stopping at the Hotel de la Paix, in connection with a passenger from Mississippi railroad, which arrived yesterday with excellent health. He may be, seeing the Paris, in connection with Mississippi railroad far beyond his He not only received for, but was treble the amount ship freighted with from Liverpool I will quickly follow." "Gen. Beauregard man, but he speaks kindness and he greeted him with money-kings of E encouraged, he re terminated to do all the industrial is prostrated by the this we can bid h the fullest measur New Orleans in t terday he took a d It is noted, as a cu was dashing along Grant, who is also in another. It is courtesies which under these circ observed. This i ing hands on this dlers felt that if t they could be in p men have better r and to experience poet calls

"That stern La Joemen

"Now, why car who are bent on t tween the two sec ample thus set the sentative men of t the men who did fighting during th and, forgetting t perfect equality, s at home to dodge shoddy contracts back."

Guns vs. Iron-wich Gun-I

ers.
That the strong sent to the bottom is now a fact about to entertain a dot resisting powers iron cased frigates has been complet kind of shot fir gun, and that of British make s importance to obs proved so irresist prodigious caliber but only such a worked in a ship it is scarcely cred sent to sea with armor than was molished, it is ve calibre, charge a increased, so tha tween ships and tled. That is the results of the reported from Sh The target exp was built up of t this compact mas in front with sol inches thick, and an inner skin of l thick. Altogethe ship's broadside inches in thickne the wall of an ol

JAN. 1, 1887

His First Sight of Lincoln.

Your correspondent had the pleasure of an interview with Mr. Dennis Hanks, an own cousin of Nancy Hanks, the wife of Thomas Lincoln and mother of Abraham. Mr. Hanks is now 88 years of age, well preserved, and never tires of speaking of the many virtues and excellencies of his relative.

"When did you first see Abe?"

"About 24 hours after birth—hardly that—I rikkilect I run all the way, over two miles, to see Nancy Hanks' boy baby. 'Twas common then to come together in them days to see new babies. Her name was Nancy Hanks before she married Lincoln. I held the wee one a minit. I was 10 years old, and it tickled me to hold the pulpy, red little thing. When Abe was about 9 years old his father moved to Indiana, Spencer county.

We came out a year later, and he then had a cabin up, and he gave us the shanty. On this spot Abe grew to manhood. Our cabins were about 15 rods apart. Abe killed a turkey the day we got there, and couldn't get through telling about it."

"It is stated you taught him to read; is that so?"

"I reckon. I taught him to spell, read and cipher. He knew his letters pretty wellish; his mother taught him his letters. If there ever was a good woman, she was one; a true Christian of the Baptist church, but she died soon after we arrived, and left him without a teacher. His father couldn't read a word. Abe went to school in all about a quarter; I then set up to help him; did the best I could. Webster's speller was his first favorite; a copy I had of the Indiana statutes came next. Then he happened on to a copy of the 'Rabian nights. Abe would lay on the floor over that book for hours. I told him they was likely lies from end to end, but he learned to read right well in them."

Not Grown Then.

"At that time he was not grown, only six feet two inches; he was six feet four and one-half inches when grown. Tall, lathy and gangling; not much appearance; not handsome; not ugly, but peculiarsome. This kind of a fellow: If a man rode on horseback, Abe would be the first out and on the fence to ask questions, till his father would give him a knock on the head; then he would throw at birds or something; but pondered all the while. He was very strong and active. I were 10 years older, but I couldn't rassel him down; his legs were too long for me. Strong? My, how he could chop wood! his ax would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore and down it would come. If you heard him falling trees you would think there were three men in the woods cutting. But he never was sassy or quarrelsome. I have seen him walk in some crowd of rowin' rowdies and tell some droll yarn that would bust them all up. It was the same when he was a lawyer. There was a sumthin' peculiarsome about him. We then had no idea a' his future greatness. He was a bright lad, but the big world seemed ahead of him. We were all slow-going folks, though we never suspected it."

"Did he take to books eagerly?"

"No; we had to hire him at first. But when he got a taste, it was the old story—we had to pull the sow's ear to get her to the trough, and then pull her tail to get her away. What church did Abe belong to? The Baptist church. I will tell you a circumstance about him. He would come home from church, put a box in the middle of the cabin floor, and repeat the sermon from text to doxology. I've heard him do it often."

"Did he get his sterling principles of character from one or both parents?"

"Both. His strong will from his father. His father used to swear a little. One day his little girl picked up a foul oath, and was bruising the bitter morsel in her sweet lips, when Nancy called 'Thomas!' and said: 'Listen, husband.' He stopped that habit thar; never swore again. Abe's kindness he got from his mother. His humor, love of humanity, hatred of slavery, all come from her. I am free to say Abe was a mother's boy."

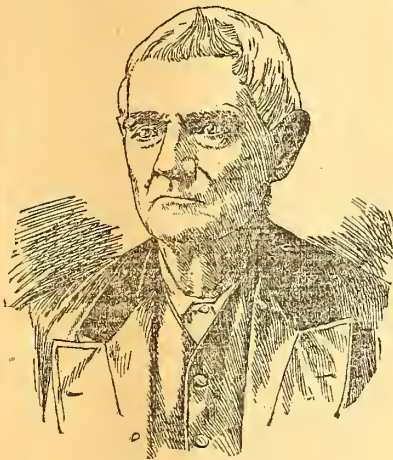
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OCTOBER 22, 1892-

DENNIS HANKS DEAD.

HE TAUGHT ABRAHAM LINCOLN TO
READ AND WRITE.

They Were Boys Together in the Old Kentucky and Illinois Homes—Early Career of This Last Member of the Old Family to Pass Away—His Trip to Washington in Behalf of Prisoners at Fortress Monroe—Death of Joseph H. Wood at Adrian—Obituary Notes.

PARIS, Ill., Oct. 21.—[Special.]—Dennis F. Hanks, the early tutor and lifelong friend of the martyred President, Abraham Lincoln, died at 1 o'clock this afternoon at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Nancy Shoaff, in this city, aged 93 years 5 months and 6 days. For the last three years he has made his home with his daughter in this city, and, while quite feeble, he was able to walk about the house and yard. Sept. 22 he was induced by his friends to attend the Emancipation day exercises at the fair grounds, and while re-



DENNIS F. HANKS.

turning home was run over by a buggy, inflicting injuries from which he never rallied, and since that time he has been confined to his room.

Dennis F. Hanks was born on the south fork of Notin's Creek, three miles southeast of Hodginsville, Hardin County, Ky., May 15, 1799. His parents were natives of Virginia and were among the first settlers in Kentucky. It was in the same neighborhood, in Hardin County, Ky., that Abraham Lincoln was born, he and Mr. Hanks being boys together. Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Hardin County, Kentucky, to Spencer County. After a year's residence in Indiana his wife died and he returned to Kentucky, where he subsequently married his second wife, Sarah Johnston, whose daughter Dennis F. Hanks afterwards married. Thomas Lincoln then returned to Indiana, accompanied by Mr. Hanks, and it was here the latter taught the boy Abraham Lincoln to read and write. After residing in Spencer County for sixteen years the families of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis F. Hanks, sixteen in number, emigrated to Illinois and settled on the Sangamon River in Macon County, near the present site of Decatur. Here Mr. Hanks remained until the fall of 1831, when he removed to Coles County.

It was during the residence of his father in Macon County that Abraham Lincoln left the parental roof and went out in the world to

fight the battle of life for himself. In the beginning of this struggle Mr. Hanks was his counselor and fast friend, as he had ever been from his early boyhood.

In 1864 occurred the riots at Charleston, Coles County, Ill., known to that locality as the Charleston Rebellion, in which Dr. York, a prominent citizen of that place, was killed. A number of the rioters were arrested and thrown into prison. Their case looked like a hopeless one, and Dennis Hanks was sent to Washington to intercede with President Lincoln in their behalf. On the way to Washington he was robbed at Crestline, O., of all his valuables but his railroad ticket. He continued on his journey, and, arriving at Washington, he went direct to the White House and, ascending the white marble steps, rapped at the door and a colored servant, who responded to the call, asked the old man what he wanted.

"I want to see President Lincoln."

"Where is your card?" inquired the usher.

"Haven't no card. Tell Abe that Dennis Hanks wants to see him."

The colored man soon returned with a broad grin on his face and showed him up. Mr. Hanks walked into the President's room and exclaimed: "How are you, Abe?"

The President left his desk and, walking towards him, exclaimed: "Why, Dennis, what brought you here?" and threw his arms around the old man and embraced him.

Mr. Hanks soon made known his errand, secured the release of the men in whose behalf he was interceding, and started for home the next day.

It was while on this visit to Mr. Lincoln that the latter presented Mr. Hanks the silver watch that he has ever since kept. It was the watch that Mr. Lincoln had carried during his early struggles in Illinois.

Mr. Hanks' health, up to a few months ago, was good. He was well posted in the current events of the day, and, until his eyes grew dim, took great pleasure in reading. He had a great retentive memory, and nothing gave him more pleasure than to talk of Abraham Lincoln and to tell anecdotes of his early boyhood.

One in which he took great delight was a circumstance in which he saved young Lincoln from drowning. It was in Spencer County, Ind. Young Lincoln, then but a lad, attempted to cross a swollen stream. He soon got beyond his depth and the rapid current was carrying him down for the last time when Mr. Hanks, with almost the strength of a giant, sprang into the stream and rescued from a watery grave the boy who was afterward to figure so prominently in ameliorating and bettering the condition of four million slaves and many millions more of his fellow men.

LINCOLN'S TUTOR DEAD.

DENNIS F. HANKS LIVED TO THE GOOD OLD AGE OF NINETY-THREE. 1892

PARIS, Ill., Oct. 22.—Dennis F. Hanks, the early tutor of Abraham Lincoln, died on Friday at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Nancy Shaaf, in this city, aged 93 years, 5 months, and 6 days. He was born near Hodginsville, Hardin County, Ky., May 15, 1799. Abraham Lincoln was a native of the same county.

Subsequently Thomas Lincoln, the father of the martyred President, and Mr. Hanks moved to Spencer County, Ind. While residing in the latter county Mr. Hanks taught Abraham Lincoln to read and write. After the two families removed to Illinois Mr. Hanks continued to be a valued adviser of young Lincoln, and the warmest friendship existed between them up to the time of President Lincoln's death.

Mr. Hanks was a man of unusual vitality, and had it not been for an unfortunate accident while returning home from Emancipation Day exercises, Sept. 22, in which he was severely bruised by being run over by a buggy, he might have rounded out a century. The interment will be made to-morrow at Charleston, Cole County, his old home.

Charles G. Hanks.

Ex-School Commissioner Charles G. Hanks of this city died at Passaic, N. J., yesterday. He was born in Troy, N. Y., in 1844. He has been a partner in the firm of Grenelle & Bethy, stock brokers, of New York, since 1879. Mr. Hanks was wealthy and a member of the National Art Club of New York. He had held many public offices here. The Hanks family, of which he was a member, was related to the family of the mother of former President Lincoln.

Dennis Hanks, the boy companion and life-long friend of Abraham Lincoln, has died at his home in Illinois. He was one of the old friends whom Lincoln always kept very near his heart. Many readers of THE REGISTER will remember the long interview with Dennis Hanks which this paper reprinted last winter from the Chicago Tribune. It gave a wonderfully vivid picture of Lincoln's early life and personal characteristics. 1889-7-4 OCT 1892

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S TUTOR.

Dennis F. Hanks Dies From Injuries Received In an Accident. 1892
Special to The Republic.

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LINCOLN'S TUTOR DYING.

Dennis Hanks, Who Taught His Cousin to Read, Probably Fatally Hurt. 1892

DANVILLE, Ill., Sept. 25.—Dennis Hanks, aged 95 years, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln and the one who taught the martyr President to read and write is in a precarious condition, from which it is thought he cannot recover. Thursday the colored people of Eastern Illinois celebrated emancipation day at Paris, Ill. Mr. Hanks had not been out of the house for two years, but at the earnest solicitation of the Committee on Arrangements, his daughter, Nancy Hanks Shoaff, consented to allow him to be taken to the fair grounds, so the colored people could see him. Late in the afternoon he started to walk to the home of his daughter, a distance of two miles. He was struck and knocked down by a runaway team, and badly bruised and shaken up. He was taken to Mrs. Shoaff's house, and since the accident has been under the influence of opiates to relieve his suffering. His great age and enfeebled condition give but little hope that he will be able to survive the shock to his system.

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One in which he took great delight was a circumstance in which he saved young Lincoln from drowning. It was in Spencer County, Ind. Young Lincoln, then but a lad, attempted to cross a swollen stream. He soon got beyond his depth and the rapid current was carrying him down for the last time when Mr. Hanks, with almost the strength of a giant, sprang into the stream and rescued from a watery grave the boy who was afterward to figure so prominently in ameliorating and bettering the condition of four million slaves and many millions more of his fellow men.

10-21-1892

A \$500 Lincoln Watch.

Mrs. James Shoaff, now in the city visiting her daughters, Mrs. W. F. Coladay and Mrs. J. A. Barney, resides at Paris, Ill. She is the owner of a watch relic which is sought after by many seekers for old keepsakes. The watch in question is a silver one which was presented to the venerable Dennis Hanks in Washington city, by his cousin, the martyred President Lincoln. Mr. Hanks is the father of Mrs. Shoaff, and to her he has given the watch. A New York gentleman has offered Mrs. Shoaff \$500 for the watch, but she refuses to part with it. A Chicago man is after it. Nothing less than four figures will get the relic.

Dennis Hanks, who taught Abraham Lincoln to read and write, will be 92 years of age May 15. He makes his home at Paris with his daughter.

OBITUARY.

Dennis F. Hanks, the early tutor of Abraham Lincoln, died on Friday at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Nancy Shoaff, in Paris, Ill., aged 93 years 4 months and 6 days. Mr. Hanks was born near Hodginsville, Hardin county, Ky., May 15, 1799. His parents were natives of Virginia, and were among the first settlers of Kentucky. In the same neighborhood in Hardin county, Ky., Abraham Lincoln was born.

and Mr. Hanks being boys together, Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Hardin county, Ky., to Spencer county, Ky. After a year's residence in Indiana he died, and he returned to Kentucky.

Thomas Lincoln then returned to Indiana, accompanied by Mr. Hanks, and it was here that the latter taught the boy, Abraham Lincoln, to read and write. After residing in Spencer county for sixteen years the families of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis F. Hanks moved to Illinois and settled on the Sangamon River, in Macon county. Here Mr. Hanks remained until the fall of 1831, when he removed to Coles county.

In 1864 occurred the riots at Charleston, in Coles county, Ill., known to that locality as the Charleston rebellion, in which Dr. York, a prominent citizen of that city, was killed. A number of the rioters were arrested and thrown into prison. Dennis Hanks was sent to Washington to intercede with President Lincoln in their behalf. Arriving at Washington, he immediately went to the White House. He was informed that he could not see him, as that was not the day for the President to see visitors. "Yes, but I must see him," said Mr. Hanks to the usher. "Show me the door of his room." This was done, and Mr. Hanks walked into the President's room and exclaimed: "How are you, Abe?" The President left his desk, and, walking toward him, exclaimed: "Why, Dennis, what brought you here?" and threw his arms around the old man and embraced him. Mr. Hanks soon made known his errand, and secured the release of the men in whose behalf he was entreating.

Prof. William Swinton, the author of many school text books and historical works, died suddenly on Monday evening in his apartment in the Nouffville flats, 252 West Eighty-fourth street.

WAS LINCOLN'S TUTOR.

DEATH OF DENNIS F. HANKS.

The Friend of the Martyred President Passes Away at the Residence of His Daughter in Paris, Ill., Aged 93 Years—Other State News.

Special to the Chicago News Record.

PARIS, Ill., Oct. 21.—Dennis F. Hanks, the early tutor and life-long friend of Abraham Lincoln, died at 1 o'clock at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Nancy Huff, in this city, aged 93 years 5 months and 6 days. For the last three years he has made his home with his daughter in this city, and, while quite feeble, he was able to walk about the house and yard. Sept. 22 he was induced by his friends to attend the Emancipation-day exercises at the fair grounds, near this city, and while returning home was run over by a buggy, receiving injuries from which he never rallied, and since that time he had been confined to his room.

Dennis F. Hanks was born on the south fork of Notions creek, three miles southeast of Hodginsville, in Hardin county, Ky., May 15, 1799. His parents were natives of Virginia and were among the first settlers in Kentucky. It was in the same neighborhood in Hardin county that Abraham Lincoln was born, he and Hanks being boys together. Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Hardin county to Spencer, Ind. After a year's residence in Indiana his wife died and he returned to Kentucky, where he subsequently married his second wife, Sarah Johnston, whose daughter Dennis F. Hanks afterward married.

Taught Lincoln to Read.

Thomas Lincoln then returned to Indiana, accompanied by Mr. Hanks, and it was here the latter taught the boy Abraham Lincoln to read and write. After residing in Spencer county for sixteen years the families of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis F. Hanks, sixteen in number, emigrated to Illinois and settled on the Sangamon river in Macon county, near the present site of Decatur. Here Mr. Hanks remained until the fall of 1831, when he removed to Coles county.

It was during the residence of his father in Macon county that Abraham Lincoln left the parental roof and went out in the world to

fight the battle of life for himself. In the beginning of this struggle Mr. Hanks was his counselor and fast friend, as he had ever been from his early boyhood.

In 1864 occurred the riots of Charleston, in Coles county, Ill., known in that locality as the Charleston rebellion, in which Dr. York, a prominent citizen of that place, was killed. A number of the rioters were arrested and thrown into prison. Their case looked like a hopeless one, and Dennis Hanks was sent to Washington to intercede with President Lincoln in their behalf. On the way to Washington Mr. Hanks was robbed at Crestline, O., of all his valuables but his railroad ticket.

He Saw the President.

He continued on his journey, and arriving at Washington went immediately to the white house and informed the usher that he wished to see President Lincoln. He was informed by that dignitary that he could not see him, as that was not the day for the president to see visitors.

"Yes, but I must see him," said Mr. Hanks. The usher then asked for his card.

"I have no card. Tell him Dennis Hanks wants to see him. Show me the door of his room," said Mr. Hanks, as he walked past the usher. This was done, and Mr. Hanks walked into the president's room and exclaimed:

"How are you, Abe?"

The president left his desk, and walking toward him exclaimed:

"Why, Dennis, what brought you here?" and threw his arms around the old man and embraced him.

Mr. Hanks soon made known his errand, secured the release of the men in whose behalf he was interceding, and started for home the next day. It was while on this visit to Mr. Lincoln that the latter presented Mr. Hanks with the silver watch that he has ever since kept. It was the watch that Mr. Lincoln had carried during his early struggles in Illinois.

Mr. Hanks' health up to a few months ago was good. He was well posted in the current events of the day, and until his eyes grew dim took great pleasure in reading. He had a most retentive memory, and nothing gave him more pleasure than to talk of Abraham Lincoln and to tell anecdotes of his early boyhood. One in which he took great delight was the relation of how he saved young Lincoln from drowning. It was in Spencer county, Indiana. Lincoln, then but a boy, attempted to cross a swollen stream. He soon got beyond his depth and the rapid current was carrying him down, when Mr. Hanks, with almost the strength of a giant, sprung into the stream and rescued from a watery grave the boy who was afterward to figure so prominently in ameliorating and bettering the condition of 4,000,000 slaves and many millions more of his fellow-men.

Paris, Ill., October 21, 1892.—Dennis F. Hanks, the early tutor and lifelong friend of the martyred President, Abraham Lincoln, died at 1 o'clock, at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Nancy Hoff, in this city, aged 93 years, 5 months and 6 days. For the last three years he has made his home with his daughter in this city. While quite feeble, he was able to walk about the house and yard. On the 22d of September he was induced by his friends to attend the Emancipation Day Exercises at the Fair Grounds, near this city, and while returning home was run over by a buggy, inflicting injuries from which he never rallied, and since that time he has been confined to his room. Dennis F. Hanks was born on the south fork of Nolin's creek, three miles southeast of Hodginsville, in Hardin county, Ky., May 15, 1799. His parents were natives of Virginia and were among the first settlers in Kentucky. It was in the same neighborhood in Hardin county, Ky., that Abraham Lincoln was born, he and Mr. Hanks being boys together. Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln emigrated from Hardin county, Ky., to Spencer, Ind., and after a year's residence in Indiana his wife died and he returned to Kentucky, where he subsequently married for his second wife, Sarah Johnston, whose daughter Dennis F. Hanks afterward married. Thomas Lincoln then returned to Indiana, accompanied by Mr. Hanks, and it was here the latter taught the boy Abraham Lincoln, to read and write. After residing in Spencer county for sixteen years, the families of Thomas Lincoln and Dennis F. Hanks, sixteen in number, emigrated to Illinois, and settled on the Sangamon river, in Macon county, near the present site of Decatur. Here Mr. Hanks remained until the fall of 1831, when he removed to Coles county. It was during the residence of his father in Macon county that Abraham Lincoln left the parental roof and went out in the world to fight the battle of life for himself. In the beginning of this struggle Mr. Hanks was his counselor and fast friend, as he had been from his early boyhood. In 1864 occurred the riots of Charleston, in Coles county, Illinois, known in that locality as the Charleston rebellion, in which Dr. York, a prominent citizen of that city, was killed. A number of rioters were arrested and thrown into prison. Their case looked like a hopeless one and Dennis Hanks was sent to Washington to intercede with President Lincoln in their behalf. On the way to Washington, Mr. Hanks was robbed at Crestline, O., of all his valuables but his railroad ticket. He continued on his journey, and arriving at Washington went immediately to the White House and informed the usher that he wished to see Mr. Lincoln, when he was informed by that dignitary that he could not see him, as that was not the day for Mr. Lincoln to see visitors.

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HE WAS ABE'S COUSIN.

INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF
THE LATE DENNIS HANKS.

Much of His Later Life Was Spent in Telling Stories of Lincoln—Strange Environment of the Martyred President's Early Life.

[Special Correspondence.]

PARIS, Ill., Oct. 21.—The death of our late citizen, the veteran Dennis Hanks, severed the last tie which bound this generation to the boyhood of Abraham Lincoln. This alone would make it an event of national interest. But to those of us who were born and reared in the land where Lincoln passed his boyhood, whose fathers have described to us hundreds of times the peculiar conditions under which characters were formed and constitutions sometimes hardened, but oftener irretrievably ruined, the reminiscences of Dennis possessed a fascination they could not have for the eastern reader.



DENNIS HANKS.

The eastern reader cannot realize as we do the environment of the Lincolns, the Hanks and the Sparrows in 1820-30. We see as in a vision the great dense forests which had so much to do in deepening their native superstition; the wild beasts in war with which they acquired a sort of destructive activity; the noxious insects swarming in the air, and poisonous reptiles lurking in the grass, which, unknown to them, seriously affected their theology; the dreadful malaria, and the still more dreaded milk sickness.

Dennis F. Hanks was born on the south fork of Nolin's creek, three miles southeast of the present Hodgenville, Harden county, Ky., May 15, 1799. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the rudeness of the society of that time and locality or the primitive character of the people, and there is an overabundance of testimony that the two families so strangely connected and eventually so famous were below rather than above the average. If there is any spirit of art or refinement in a people it is most apt to show in their religion, and if Peter Cartwright and others of that day can be believed the popular religion of that day and place was a sort of rude frenzy. Other respects there was a wild freedom, which often resulted evil. Of one case of such unrestrained

brought a second wife from Kentucky. With her came her three children, John, Sarah and Matilda Johnston. Dennis Hanks now found the Lincoln cabin far more attractive. It was his home, so far as he could be said to have one, and in due time he married Sarah Johnston.

The story that Dennis had some time before taught young Lincoln to read and write is, in the language of that locality, "a little mixed." Abraham had attended school a few weeks in Kentucky. He attended long enough in Indiana to make his entire schooling amount to a year, and his stepmother was a fairly well educated woman. So it is not likely that Dennis could have taught him much.

Disease ravaged the settlement. The plague they had always with them, and the dreaded milk sickness came again and again—about once in five years, as the way of this disease is. No one has explained this mysterious blight. In my boyhood all that was known was that certain springs were infected with it, and that streams flowing therefrom had to be fenced till it had flowed some 200 yds. when the poison evaporated. Cattle suffered most, and, though ever so little affected, their milk and meat were poisonous to all who ate them. It returned at successive longer intervals as the country cleared, and as late as 1878 wrought terrible destruction in one neighborhood.

In 1828 and the next year it cost the financial ruin of the Hanks & colon families, and in 1830 they were oft described as "wretched" and "poor."

anecdotes are all we have of Dennis for the next thirty years, but at this point "Old John Hanks," as the boys called him, became a prominent figure. He had more "money sense," as western people say, than any of the lot, and had gone before and selected good locations for the others. To spring he and Abraham Lincoln split enough rails to fence in fifteen acres, and uncommonly good rails they must have been, for thirty years later "Old John" electrified the state convention by entering with one of them on his shoulder, and before the close of June, 1860, tens of thousands of toothpicks and other souvenirs made of these rails were in evidence in the west. It is only fair to add that the rails were made of black walnut and white oak, and that those woods do last a long time.

In 1856 Charleston, capital of Coles county, Ills., in which Dennis Hanks located in 1831, was the scene of a terrible tragedy. A man named Monroe, who had killed his father-in-law, Mr. Ellington, in an affray, was lynched, with circumstances of shocking barbarity. Visiting the vicinity immediately after, I first heard the name of Abraham Lincoln mentioned as that of an influential man and popular speaker, but among all my acquaintances between there and Terre Haute I never once heard mention of a Hanks.

Seven years later there was another tragedy at Charleston, and Dennis suddenly became a prominent man. He then indulged in many reminiscences of his "Cousin Abe—president now, you know." In the meantime, however, the rails split, as alleged, by Abraham Linco^l and John Hanks had gone on their sensational course and been whittled into souvenirs, and early in 1861 Lincoln made his last visit to his relatives in Coles county. Dennis then lived in the vicinity of Farmington, where he had located in 1857, and of all the relationships he had only one who saw him.

The occ

were

gal result.

The Genoese, in their age of extremity, erected a hospital especially for those to whom, in their complicated Italian phrase, "had not been granted the benediction of a father's smile." * is p. fully certain that Dennis and his Cousin Naucy, mother of Abraham Lincoln, were of that class. Their mothers had been known simply as "the Hanks girls," and were described as "uncommonly smart and mighty fond of tending camp meetings and such." Of course both these waifs took their mother's family name. Lincoln's mother was born in Virginia. John Hanks, another relative, was a son of that Thomas Hanks in whose shop, at Elizabethtown, Ky., Thomas Lincoln learned the carpenter's trade.

All the testimony indicates that the family were of the class known as "poor whites." It all emphasizes the great fact that Abraham Lincoln was a man apart from his kind, an exception quite as remarkable as Shakespeare, one not to be numbered among his people, and it requires no great power of religious imagination to believe that he was raised up for the work he did. It is a fact worth noting that in the only biography Lincoln ever wrote he does not give the maiden or Christian name of his mother, and gives but three lines to her family. The genial and communicative Dennis Hanks has told us nearly all we know about his race.

The first dozen years or so of his life are a historic blank. His mother married Thomas Sparrow, and her sister married Henry Sparrow, the result of these unions being that Nancy Hanks, another of the president, at an early age went to live with Thomas Sparrow, and thus she and Dennis passed several years under the same roof. The story that Dennis saved the life of Lincoln in Kentucky is an error. The man who did the nation that kindness was Austin Gollaher, of Morgensville, and he was still living at last accounts. Dennis next appears in history at the age of eighteen, when he reached the Lincoln home in Indiana, became a neighbor and in no long time a champion of young Abraham. The two families worked together, aided each other and shared their little fortunes in a sort of frontier communism, and very naturally Dennis became the tutor of his younger relative in all sorts of woodcraft. In 1818 the great calamity fell on those simple people. There is generally much sickness in settling a new country, but that in Indiana was probably worse than in any other state.

According to all accounts, and confirmed by our observations in later years, people who got through the winter "in any kind of condition" usually enjoyed good health as long as the vegetation was growing, but when "the turn of the season came on" in August the pioneers fell in all directions. Travelers through southern Indiana at that time relate that they would often call in succession at half a dozen houses before finding one where any one was able to even prepare a good meal for a chance comer. After three to five years of this sort of thing many constitutions were so weakened that the next winter brought death. Dennis told us of an affliction known as the "cold plague," meaning probably those dreadful congestive chills which sometimes killed the victim in three hours.

On top of this came the dreaded milk sickness, and "the tribe," as people good naturedly called such a family association, was decimated. Thomas Sparrow and wife died almost at the same time. Abraham Lincoln's mother soon followed. In fact the whole vicinity was terribly scourged. A year later Thomas Lincoln

Dennis Hanks, Cousin of the Emancipator, Has Left Record of the Early Days in the Humble Little Kentucky Log Cabin.

WEDDINGS and births always attract attention, so it is interesting to note that the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, the parents of Abraham Lincoln, and the advent into the world of the Great Emancipator were not without exception.

It was always the proud boast of Rev. Edward Head, a Methodist minister, and likewise a carpenter, that he performed the ceremony that united Abraham Lincoln's parents in marriage. In telling of the bridal couple and the feast, he said:

"Nancy Hanks was a fresh-looking girl, I should say past twenty. Tom was a respectable mechanic, who could take his choice; and she was to be treated with respect. I was at the infare given by John H. Parrott, her guardian—and it was only girls with money who had had guardians appointed by the court. Our table was of puncheons cut from the solid logs, and they were the cabin's floor next day. We had bear meat, venison, wild turkey, ducks' eggs, wild and tame—so common that you could buy them at two bits a bushel—maple sugar, swung on a string, to bite off for coffee or whisky; sirup in big gourds, peach and honey; a sheep that the two families barbecued whole over coals of wood burned in a pit, and covered with green boughs to keep in the juices; and a race for the whisky bottle."

Another guest at the wedding was Christopher Columbus Graham, who lived to be more than one hundred years old. In explaining his presence at the festivities, Graham said:

"You see, I was out hunting roots for medicines, and I just went to the wedding to get a good supper—and I got it. Tom Lincoln was a carpenter, and a good one for those days, when a cabin was built mostly with an ax. It didn't have a nail or a bolt or a hinge in it—only leathers and pins to the door. There wasn't any glass, either, except what you might find in bottles or watches and spectacles, if they owned them. But Tom Lincoln had the best set of tools in the whole county."

Dennis Hanks, Lincoln's cousin and playmate, takes up the story:

"When Nancy married Tom he was working in a carpenter shop. It wasn't Tom's fault he couldn't make a living by his trade; there was scarcely any money in the country. So Tom took up some land—mighty poor land, but the best he could get when he hadn't much to trade for it.

"Tom and Nancy lived on a farm about two miles from us when Abe was born," Dennis Hanks recalled. "I recollect Tom coming over to our house one cold morning in February and saying, kind of slow:

"Nancy's got a boy baby."

"Mother got flustered and hurried up her work to go over and look after the little fellow; but I didn't have nothing to wait for, so I cut and run the whole two miles to see my new

cousin. You bet I was tickled to death. Babies wasn't as common as blackberries in the woods of Kentucky.

"I rolled up and slept in a bearskin that night by the fireplace, so I could see the little fellow when he cried, and Tom had to get up and tend to him. Nancy let me hold him pretty soon.

"Folks often ask me if Abe was a good-looking baby. Well, now, he looked just like any other baby at first—like red cherry pulp squeezed dry. And he didn't improve as he grew older. Abe never was much for looks. I recollect how Tom joked about Abe's long legs when he was toddling about the cabin. He grew out of his clothes faster than Nancy could make them.

"After he could walk Abe never gave Nancy any trouble, except to keep him in clothes. Most of the time we went barefoot. Did you ever wear a wet buckskin glove? Well, moccasins weren't any protection against the wet. For snow, birch bark with hickory bark soles, strapped over yarn socks, beat



"Nancy Let Me Hold Him Pretty Soon."

buckskin all hollow. Abe and me got pretty handy contriving things that way. And Abe, about as soon as he was weaned, was right out in the woods, fishing in the creek, setting traps for rabbits and muskrats, going on coon-hunts with Tom and me and the dogs, following up bees to find the bee trees and dropping corn for his pappy. It was a mighty interesting life for a boy, but there was a good many chances that he wouldn't live to grow up."

So, taken all in all, even admitting the dignity conferred on Tom Lincoln's bride by the possession of a guardian, it was a lowly chronicle—this of the backwoods wedding and the children's log-cabin birth. But it has been the story of the origins of hundreds of other Americans, who, like their most famous exemplar, have risen by the sheer force of their energy and brains to positions commanding the respect of those born to the earth's richest comforts and most lavish luxuries.

And there is this to be said of it: That Lincoln's emancipation of the poor blacks was not the only freedom he gained for humanity through his career. He had the cabin of his birth flung in his teeth many a time before his home was the nation's most coveted place of residence. After that, no son of poverty need take shame for the humble roof that sheltered him in infancy.

When Lincoln Was Born.

Lincoln's cousin, Dennis Hanks, once told the story of that momentous birth in his customary homely language. "Tom and Nancy," he said, referring to Lincoln's father and mother, "lived on a farm about two miles from us when Abe was born. I ricollect Tom comin' over to our house one cold mornin' in Feb'uary an' sayin' kind o' slow 'Nancy's got a baby boy.' Mother got flustered an' hurried up her work to go over to look after the little feller, but I didn't have nothin' to wait fur, so I cut an' run the hull two mile' to see my new cousin. You bet I was tickled! Babies wasn't as common as blackberries in the woods o' Kaintucky. Mother come over an' washed him an' put a yaller flannel petticoat on him, an' cooked some dried berries with wild honey fur Nancy, an' slicked things up an' went home. An' that's all the nuss'n either of 'em got."

1520

"His First Sight of Lincoln"

BY W. M. MC CONNELL

IT WAS in 188— that I first met Mr. Dennis Hanks, then an old man, eighty-eight years of age. It was while living in Charleston, Illinois. Mr. Hanks, even at that age, was very straight, well-preserved, and never tired of speaking of the many virtues and excellencies of Lincoln.

"When did you first see Abe?"

"About twenty-four hours after birth—hardly that—I rickoleet I run all the way, over two miles, to see Nancy Hanks' baby. 'Twas common to come together in them days to see new babies. Her name was Nancy Hanks before she married Thomas Lincoln. I held the wee one a minute. I was ten years old, and it tickled me to hold the pulpy, red little thing. When Abe was about nine years old his father moved to Indiana, Spencer County. We came out a year later, and he then had a cabin up and he gave us the shanty. On this spot Abe grew to manhood. Our cabins were about fifteen rods apart. Abe killed a wild turkey the day we got there, and couldn't get through telling about it."

"IT IS stated you taught him to read; is that so?"

"I reckon. I taught him to spell, read, and cipher. He knew his letters pretty wellish; his mother taught him his letters. If there ever was a good woman she were one, a true Christian of the Baptist church; but she died soon after we arrived, and left him without a teacher. His father couldn't read a word. Abe went to school in all about a quarter; I then set up to help him; did the best I could. Webster's speller was his first favorite. A copy of the Indiana Statutes came next. Then he happened on to a copy of the 'Rabian Nights!' Abe would lay on the floor with a chair under his head, and laugh over that book for hours. I told him they was likely lies from end to end, but he learned to read right well in them."

"At that time he was not grown, only six feet

two inches; he was six feet four and a half when grown. Tall, lathy and gangling; not much appearance; not handsome; not ugly; but peculiar-some. This kind of a fellow: If a man rode up horse-back Abe would be the first out and on the fence to ask questions, till his father would give him a bump on the head; then he would throw stones or something; but pondered all the while. He were very strong and active. I were ten years older, but I couldn't rattle him down, his legs were too strong for me. My, how he could chop wood. His ax would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him falling trees you would think there were three men in the woods cutting; but he was never sassy or quarrelsome.

"I HAVE seen him walk into a crowd of rowdies and tell them some droll yarn that would bust them all up. It was the same when he was a lawyer. There was a somethin' peculiarsome about him. We then had no idea of his future greatness. He was a bright lad, but the big world seemed ahead of him. He didn't at first take to books, we had to hire him at first. But when he got a taste, it was the old story—we had to pull the sow's ears to the trough, and then pull her tail to get her away."

"What church did Abe belong to?"

"The Baptist church. I will tell you a circumstance about him. He would come home from church, put a box in the middle of the cabin floor, and repeat the sermon from text to doxology. I've heard him do it often."

"He got his sterling principles of character from both parents, his strong will from his father. His father used to swear a little. One day his little girl picked up a foul oath and was bruising the bitter morsel in her sweet lips, when Nancy called, 'Thomas,' and said, 'listen, husband.' He stopped that habit right thar, and never swore again. Abe's kindness he got from his mother. His humor, love of humanity, hatred of slavery, all came from her. I am free to say Abe was a mother's boy."

Dugland 2-8-1925

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SAN DIEGO MAN LINCOLN'S TUTOR

(Continued from Page 1)

a very industrious and pious woman. If there ever was a Christian she was one.

"I was the only man in the neighborhood that could write and was often called upon to write notes and letters and whatever was to be written."

Further information concerning the education of young Abraham is contained in other newspaper interviews with Dennis Hanks, published in Tate's old home, Charleston, Ill., which is rich in Lincoln lore.

Made Lincoln's Pen

In one interview he is quoted:

"I first taught him (Lincoln) to spell and read and write. I made the first pen that he ever had. I killed a buzzard and took his wing feathers for pens, as there were no geese in the settlement. We either used buzzard or wild turkey feathers. Abe's first pen was made of a buzzard quill."

One more instance in which Lincoln overrode military authority to extend clemency to erring citizens, was related by Hanks to Tate. During the Civil war there had been a riot in Charleston, Ill., in connection with the draft, which resulted in the death of half a dozen men and the arrest of a hundred or more citizens by military authorities and their imprisonment in Fort Delaware. A movement was started in Illinois to have the men brought back to their home county for trial under civil authority. When all other efforts failed, Dennis Hanks was sent to Washington to intercede with the President.

"When I arrived at the north gate of the White House yard," Tate quotes him, "I saw the soldiers on guard in their glittering armor but I walked up the gravel walk and was met near the steps by a big, jolly looking Irishman who very authoritatively asked me what I wanted there. I told him firmly that I wanted to see the President. He replied, 'You can't see him now; this is not his hour for visitors'. I told him to stand aside and I would show him. Thinking me some harmless crank, he let me proceed and followed to see some fun. I told him to stand at the President's door and see if I didn't get in. I opened the door and looked in. There sat Abe on the other side of the room, writing at an old table worth about 75 cents, and I said, 'You're a pretty looking President; where are those old leather breeches you used to wear?'"

Same Old Abe

"He jumped up and received me in his usual style of other days. After a private talk I fixed the business up for which I was sent. When I came out the Irishman said I was the blamdest man he ever saw. 'How did you get to stay in there? You must be some relation to Mr. Lincoln.' I told him I expected I was."

"When I got the papers signed up by Mr. Lincoln for allowing the Charleston men to be sent back home for trial, I saw Secretary of War Stanton about it. As he wanted to be stubborn about it, I told him I did not want any tomfoolery. He

An Uncle of Lincoln Gave Him Early Lessons

First to Instruct Great Emancipator in His Reading and Writing Lessons

It is in most of the histories that Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday a nation is celebrating today, was taught to read and write by his mother. Among the authorities helping to perpetuate this tradition is the Encyclopedia Britannica which says of Lincoln's early education, "His own mother taught him to read and his stepmother urged him to study."

But now comes a San Diego man with testimony obtained at first hand to refute this tradition. This man is D. J. Tate, 3664 Nile street, who has preserved newspaper records of an

interview he once had with Dennis Hanks, a second cousin of the Emancipator. In this interview Hanks asserted it was he who taught Lincoln to spell, read and write. Lincoln's mother taught her son his letters, Hanks explained, but was not competent to impart further erudition. "She could read a little," he is quoted, "but only in the Bible. I do not know who taught her. I never saw her read in anything except the Bible. She could not write. She was raised a Separate Baptist and was

(Continued on Page 8)

was a little, bob-tailed Yankee and when he saw Lincoln he said: 'What in the devil did you do that for?' I would have hung every one of them."

"Lincoln told him if they came home to their families they would not harm anyone."

In one of the papers preserved by Tate, Hanks is given as authority for the statement that Lincoln's mother's real name was Nancy Sparrow and not Nancy Hanks, as she is known to historians.

"Henry Sparrow married Lucy Hanks," he is quoted. "The fruits of the marriage of Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks were the following eight children: Nancy, James, Sallie, Betsy, George, Henry, Lucinda and Thomas. Nancy, being the first born, was a blonde, the very picture of her mother and the Hanks family, and someone exclaimed, 'She is a Hanks,' and ever afterward she was known as Nancy Hanks, instead of Nancy Sparrow, which was her real name."

LINCOLN LORE

1929

Charleston, Ill., July 17.—D. H. Dowling, formerly of Charleston but now connected with the Central Illinois Public Service Company at Springfield, is spending his vacation in Charleston.

Mr. Dowling, who is a grandson of Dennis Hanks, has a fund of information regarding the Lincoln family, and with the unusual interest felt here now on account of the work on the Lincoln National Memorial Highway is having to answer a great many questions from interested people.

Mr. Dowling has given some greatly appreciated facts. His mother, Sarah Jane Hanks Dowling, was named for her grandmother, Sarah Bush Lincoln. Dennis Hanks having married Elizabeth Johnston, the daughter of Sarah Bush Lincoln by a marriage former to her union with Thomas Lincoln.

Mrs. Dowling was eight years of age at the time of the emigration from Gentry county, Indiana, to Macon county, Illinois, and remembered well incidents of the pilgrimage, which incidents she often repeated to her son, Mr. Dowling. She remembered the trip through Vincennes, the crossing of the Wabash river there. The trip over the great western mail route from that point to Lawrenceville, the crossing of the Embarras river going into Lawrenceville the re-crossing of it as they left there northward for Russellville and Palestine. Owing to the Biblical association of the latter name she remembered that town well. From talks with her and with other members of the cavalcade, Mr. Dowling is convinced that the Embarras river was crossed at McCann's ford, just west of the present town of Diona.

Mr. Dowling says that following their visit with relatives at the old settlement at Paradise the trip was made to Macon county where Mr. and Mrs. John Hanks, cousin of Dennis Hanks and of Abraham Lincoln were visited. The Lincolns

then settled on the Sangamon river there and spent the year. Poor crops, the extreme cold and chills and fever experienced in that location decided them to return to Indiana and they started on that trip. Stopping at the Radleys and Sawyers again at Paradise, they were induced to settle in this vicinity and their first home was made at Buck Grove west of the present site of Lerna. They later moved to the forty acres just south of Lerna where they stayed a short time before the final and permanent settlement on the Lincoln farm just south of Farmington.

Mr. Dowling had in his possession original pictures of Sarah Bush Lincoln, Mrs. Dennis Hanks, Mrs. Dowling and Mrs. A. H. Chapman, all taken in 1864 by Thomas Lincoln Johnston, grandson of Sarah Bush Lincoln, when he was operating a studio in Mount & Hill's hall, afterward the City Hall located at the southeast corner of Fifth and Monroe streets on the site of the present Daily News building. Mr. Dowling also had a daguerrotype of Dennis Hanks and his wife and pictures of John T. Hanks, Mrs. John T. Hanks and of Nancy Hanks Shoaff of Paris, and a picture of himself taken at the same time at the Johnston studio here.

Dennis Hanks Says He Taught Lincoln to Read and Write

Charleston, W. Va., Jan. 2-12-27

(Robert McIntyre)

Few know that the boyhood partner of Lincoln still lived in 1892, at the age of 86 years, in Charleston.

This man was kin to the great liberator, was his backwoods teacher and guide, and knew home of "Honest Abe" than any man. His reminiscences of the boy Lincoln have never been published to my knowledge.

I found him hale and erect, ready to recount for the benefit of a younger generation, the incidents which marked the youth of the martyred President. His name was Dennis F. Hanks, and he was a cousin to Lincoln. Uncle Dennie, as he was called, was a typical Kentuckian, born in Hardin county, 1899. His face was sun-bronzed and plowed with furrows of time; a resolute mouth with firm grip of the jaw; broad forehead above a pair of unweariable eyes. The eyes seemed out of place in the weary, faded face; they glowed and flashed like two diamond sparks, set in ridges of dull gold. The face was a serious one, but the play of light in the eyes, unquenchable by time, betrayed the nature full of sunshine and elate life. A sidewise glance at the profile showed a face strikingly Lincoln-like, prominent cheek bones, temples, nose and chin; but best of all that twinkling drollery in the eye that flashed in the White House during the dark days of the Civil War. To our query, he replied cheerily:

"Certainly, certainly, sir, I'll talk to you about Abe. I kin talk, to,, bein' as I am the only livin' man that knows all about him."

"How old was Mr. Lincoln when you first met him?"

Was 10 When Lincoln Was Born

"About twenty-four hours, hardly that; I recollect I ran all the way, over two miles, to see Nancy Hanks' boy baby. 'Twas common then for connection to gather in them days to see new babies. Her name was Nancy Hanks before she married Thomas Lincoln. I held the wee one a minnit. I was 10 years old, and it tickled me to hold the pulpy, red little Lincoln."

"When did you move to Indiana?"

"When Abe was about 9. Mr. Lincoln moved first, and built a camp of brush in Spencer county. We came out a year later, and he than had a cabin up, and he gave us the shanty. On this spot Abe grew to manhood."

"How far apart were your cabins?"

"About fifteen rods. Abe killed a turkey the day we got there, and

couldn't get through tellin' about it. The name was pronounced 'Linkhorn' by the folks then. We was all uneducated. After a spell we learned better."

"In the 'Life of Lincoln,' published after his nomination, it is stated that you taught him to read."

"Yes, sir; I did. I taught him to spell, read and cipher. * He knew his letters pretty wellish, but no more."

His mother taught him his letters. If ever there was a good woman on earth she was one, a true Christian of the Baptist church; but she died soon after we arrived, and left him without a teacher. His father couldn't read a word."

"Is it possible he had no schooling?"

"Only about one-quarter, scarcely that. I then set in to help him. I didn't know much, but I did the best I could."

"What books did he read first?"

"Webster's speller. When I got him through that, I only had a copy of Indiana statutes. Then he got hold of a book, I can't recollect the name, but maybe you kin if I tell you somethin' et was in it. It told a yarn about a feller, a nigger or suthin', that sailed a flatboat up to a rock and the rock was magnetised and drewed the nails out of his boat, and he got a duckin', or drowned; or suthin', I forgot now."

"That is the story of Sinbad in the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"That't it; that's the book. Abe would lay on the floor with a chair under his head and laugh over them Rabian Nights by the hour. I told him it was likely lies from end to end, but he learned to read right well in it."

"Had he any other books?"

"Yes, I borrowed for him the 'Life of Washington' and the 'Speeches of Henry Clay.' They had a powerful influence on him. He told me afterwards, in the White House, he wanted to live like Washington. His speeches show that. But the other book did the most amazing work. He was a Democrat, like his father and all of us, when he began to read it. When he closed it he was a Whig, heart and soul, and he went step by step 'till he became leader of the Republicans."

"Will you describe him when a boy?"

Inquisitive as a Boy

"Well, he was at this time not grown, only six feet and two inches high. He was six feet and four and

one-half inches when grown—tall, lathy and gangling—not much appearance, not handsome, not ugly, but peculiar. This kind of a feller: If a man rode up horseback, Abe would be the first one out, up on the fence asking questions, 'till his father would give him a knock side o' the head; then he'd go and throw at snowbirds or suthin', but ponderin' all the while."

"Was he active and strong?"

"He was that. I was 10 years older, but I couldn't rattle him down. His legs was too long for me to throw him. He would fling one foot upon my shoulder and make me swing corners swift, and his arms so long and strong! My! how he could chop! His ax would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him fallin' trees in a clearin' you would say there was three men at work by the way

the trees fell. But he never was sassy or quarrelsome. I've seen him walk into a crowd of sawin' rowdies, and tell some drole yarn, and bust them all up. It was the same when he was a lawyer; all eyes were on him whenever he riz. There was a suthin' peculiarsome about him."

"What did you teach him to write with?"

"Sometimes he would write with a

(Continued from Page One.)

piece of charcoal or the p'int of a burnt stick on the fence or floor. We got a little paper at the country town, and I made ink out of blackbury briar-root and a little copperas in it. It was black; but the copperas would eat the paper after a while. I made his first pen out of a turkey buzzard feather; them's good for pens. We had no geese them days. After he learned to write he was scrawlin' his name everywhere; sometimes he would write it in the white sand down on the crick bank, and leave it till the fresh would blot it out."

"That name is written now, not in sand but high on the heroic roll in Liberty's proud temple, above the names of all save one. Next to the name of the immortal Washington blazes the signature of Abraham Lincoln. That plain name is now a ginglier title than is worn on earth. Yes, that's so, and rightly, too. Not for his greatness, he wasn't the greatest man that ever lived, but he was the honestest. I reckon he never did a mean act. I could see he didn't know how, an' he never learned."

"Did you have any idea of his future?"

"No; it was a new country, and he was a raw boy; rather a bright an' likely lad, but the big world seemed far ahead of him. We were slow goin' folks, but he had it in him, though we

never suspected it."

"Did he take to books eagerly?"

"No; we had to hire him at first. But when he got a taste, it was the old story—we had to pull the sow's ears to git her to the trough, and pull her tail to get her away. He read a great deal and had a wonderful memory, wonderful. Never forgot anything."

"What church did Abe attend?"

"The Baptist. I'll tell you a circumstance about him. He would come home from church and put a box in the middle of the cabin floor and repeat the sermint from text to doxology. I've heard him do it often."

"Was he a religious man?"

"Well, he wasn't in early life a religious man. He was a moral man, strictly—never went to frolics, never drunk liquor, never used tobacco, never swore. But in after life he became more religious; but the Bible puzzled him, especially the miracles. He often asked me in the timber or sittin' around the fireplace nights to explain scripture. He never joined any church or secret order."

"How did the lad fare for food and clothing?"

"Plenty, such as it was—corn dodger bacon, and game, some fish and wild fruits. I've often seen him take a dodger to the field and gnaw at it when plowing. We had very little wheat flour. The nearest mill was 18 miles, a boss mill it was, with a plug pullin' a sweep around, and Abe used to say his hound could stand and eat the flour all day as fast as it was made and then be ready for his supper. For clothing he had jeans. He was grown before he wore all wool pants."

"Did you move with him to Illinois?"

"Yes, I bought a little improvement near him, 6 miles from Decatur. Here the famous rails were split that were carried around in the campaign. They were called his rails; but nobody can tell about that. I split some of 'em, and we had a rail frolic and folks came and helped us split. He was a master-hand maulin rails. I heard him say in a speech one day about these rails—'If I didn't make these, I have made many just as good.' Then the crowd yelled."

"Were you his crony and companion?"

"Yes; I was the only boy in the place, all them years, and we was always together."

"Did you ever vist him in Washington?"

"Certainly; there were some folks arrested (When soldiers drank and Democrats quarreled in the Charleston riot) in Charleston, and I for their folks' sakes, went on durin' the war to get them free, for it was best. I got

there and found the White House surrounded with soldiers. I went up to the door to go in, and a reporter (means porter), stopped me and said: 'Who do you want to see?' I said, 'Mr. Lincoln.' He said: 'You can't see him; it ain't the time of day yet.' I said: 'I'll show you if I can't. I hain't come here from Illinois for nothin'.' He grinned and showed me the door of his office. Outside was a heap of fellers waitin' to git to see the President. I opened the door kinder soft, and at the other end of a big room sat Abe at an old desk worth about six bits. 'Hey?' I hollered, 'you're a pretty President, ain't ye?' He looked up and said, 'Well, Dennis, is that you?' and made a run and just gathered me. When I could git able to talk I said:

'I don't want no offis, Abe.' He said, 'most of 'em do, Dennis', and smiled kinder tired. I told my errand, and he said to cme up next morning and he would fix it. We talked an hour as friendly as ever about long-gone times then he told me to go down to the house and see Mary—that's his wife. She's dead now, poor soul. I knowed they was too high-falutin' down to Mary's for me, so I went to a tavern and put up. Next morning I went up, and Abe had an armload of indictments and he said, 'take these over to Stanton and he'll fix it.' I said 'Abe, I don't know where the plague'oned place is.' He he called a reporter standin' by and said: 'Take these to Mr. Stanton.' Pretty soon Mr. Stanton, in a bob-tail coat, came in. He didn't want to let 'em go; but Abe was kind an' made him sign 'em. When Stanton went out, I said: 'Abe, if I was as big as you are, I would take Stanton over my knee and spank him.' He laughed and said, 'it is not easy to keep my Cabinet all in good humor.' I left an' came home, and never saw him again. The next spring he was killed."

"When did you hear of his death?"

"The day after he was shot. I couldn't believe it. I went about saying surely it isn't so. I mind it all like it was yesterday. A man came to my shop and said: 'Dennis, Old Abe's dead—murdered last night in Washington.'"

* (The old school books said Abe's step-mother was his teacher.)

TWO COUSINS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN



John Hanks.



Dennis Hanks.

Photographs Courtesy of William E. Burton.

that greeted Lincoln's name in the convention hall had subsided a little, Dick Oglesby ascended the platform and announced that an old Democrat, John Hanks, wanted to make a contribution. Then, down the aisle came old John Hanks and Isaac Jennings, bearing the two rails and proclaiming Abraham Lincoln as "the rail candidate" for the Presidency. Then they brought Lincoln to the platform. He had been undecided whether to attend the convention or not; he was "too much of a candidate to attend, and not enough of a candidate to stay away." He arrived the afternoon before the con-

vention opened and spent 37½ cents for his first pair of spectacles. He stood on the platform with old John Hanks and the rails. It was a proud moment for both men. John Hanks not only carried rails for Lincoln; he actually voted for him. And that was "going some" for a Hanks. With the aid of the editor of the Republican paper of Decatur he prepared an article telling why he voted for Lincoln, and it is a good article. A regiment organized in Central Illinois proved too much of a handful for its first Colonel, and a quiet man from Galena, who had been

hunting up rusty muskets in the various arsenals, took the regiment in charge and whipped it into shape. When Colonel U. S. Grant was promoted Dick Oglesby became the Colonel of that regiment and John Hanks was regimental wagon master. He was a past master in all pertaining to horseflesh, but he was 60, and after two years of army life his rheumatism got the better of him and Lincoln sent him back to Decatur. There he died, and his tombstone in Boiling Springs Cemetery bears the simple inscription: "John Hanks, died July 1, 1889, eighty-seven years old, four months and

twenty-two days." His wife is buried beside him.

John Hanks was almost wholly illiterate, but shrewd and intelligent. He was rough and coarse, but he was generous and sincere. He joined with Dennis in the lie about Lincoln's mother, declaring that she was the legitimate child of Henry and Lucy Sparrow and that her name was never Hanks. But I do not think the recording angel made a very black mark against that record.

John Hanks was not so religious as Dennis, but he did not wholly neglect religion. He was a Universalist most of his life, but near the end he joined the Disciples and was put under the water.

He was tall and large in every way. In middle life he weighed 200 pounds, and when he grew old he weighed more than that. Dennis was smooth-shaven, but John grew an ample beard which turned white rather early. He was called "old John Hanks," but is remembered around Decatur as "Uncle Johnny."

The Log Cabin in Chicago.

In 1865 he, with the aid of Dennis, removed the log cabin which they had helped the Lincolns to erect. The logs were numbered and the cabin was exhibited in Chicago in connection with the Northwestern Sanitary Fair, June 1 to 24, 1865, and then on Boston Common from the end of July through August of the same year. John and Dennis sold souvenirs and met distinguished people—General and Mrs. Grant, Senator Charles Sumner, the Marquis of Drogheda and Lady Drogheda, and many others. These distinguished people did not abash either John or Dennis.

Of all Lincoln's cousins these two knew him best, and both of them influenced Lincoln's life. It is well to remember who they were and to have a discriminating judgment of their lives and personalities.

yielded, but Dennis had to encounter Stanton, "a little Yankee in a bob-tailed coat," who was justly stern about the matter. But Lincoln gave Dennis one thing that pleased him much. Until his inauguration Lincoln had carried a silver watch; now he had a gold one and he gave the silver watch to Dennis, who kept it as long as he lived. It then went to the Gunther collection and now is in the Barrett collection in Chicago.

After the death of Lincoln Dennis was often interviewed. William H. Herndon questioned and cross-questioned him. Dennis was remarkably clear and consistent. He told one lie. In order to save the memory of Lincoln's mother from what he counted the disgrace of having been "base-born"—a disgrace which all his life he had felt—he dated back the marriage of Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks and declared that Lincoln's mother was not a Hanks, but that her mother, whose maiden name was Lucy Hanks, was married, before the birth of her daughter Nancy, to Henry Sparrow. It was a futile lie, but the lie of a chivalrous man. Dennis lied like a gentleman.

But all the rest was true. And if he seemed to his interviewers to be an egotist he did not so impress his neighbors. They said and still say that while he liked to talk of Lincoln and to magnify his own share in making Lincoln a great man others always had to begin the conversation.

He Liked Discussion.

Dennis had a keen mind and was fond of discussion. He knew all the arguments of the backwoods Baptists in favor of immersion and he believed them, as Lincoln did; but Dennis did not join the "Baptists," as he pronounced it. He became a member of the Charleston Church of the Disciples of Christ, which put him just as deeply under the water.

His grandson, Thomas Benton Shoaff, married a very charming woman, an Episcopalian, whose religious training had been of a very different order from his own. Dennis Hanks liked to discuss theology with her. "I can remember no finer sight," she said to me, "than Grandfather Hanks reading his Bible and pausing to ask me, 'Nellie, do you think this means thus and so?'"

Dennis drank, but generally temperately. Herndon heard that he sometimes got "gloriously drunk," but this must have been exceptional. Nearly everybody drank whisky in those days, and Dennis was counted a temperate man, though by no means a total abstainer. He chewed tobacco, but that habit also was almost universal.

His neighbors speak of him as kind and habitually charitable in judgment and scrupulously truthful. In his old age he lived in the homes of his children, and in his last year he was at Paris, Ill., in the home of his daughter Nancy, wife of James Shoaff, who was editor, as his son Douglas in that town still is, of a

A Celebration and a Death.

The year was 1892 and the negroes of Charleston were celebrating the anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment. They asked him as a near relative of Lincoln to sit on their platform at the fair grounds, and promised to look after him and bring him safely home. They grew so enthusiastic over their freedom that they forgot him, and he, having no conveyance at his command, set out to walk the two miles to town. He was nearly 94, but the walk did not dismay him. He was run over by a runaway team and, after a painful illness, died on Oct. 21, 1892.

With him died our only authentic source of knowledge of Abraham Lincoln during his infancy and boyhood. No other man had such opportunity to know Lincoln and no one else knew him so truthfully as Dennis Hanks. Partisans have seized upon his one generous lie to impeach all his testimony; but as compared with his detractors he was a model of veracity. It was not for his lie they hated him, but for his truthfulness.

Something of the story of John Hanks has come into this narrative and the rest can be briefly told. In the Spring of 1831 he and Abraham Lincoln went down the Mississippi together. John did not go as far as New Orleans, but as he and Lincoln talked afterward Lincoln told him of seeing in that city human beings sold on the auction block. It is to John Hanks that we owe Lincoln's prophetic declaration that "if he ever had a chance to hit that institution, he would hit it hard."

A Visit to a Rail Fence.

In 1849 John Hanks joined the gold diggers and made three trips to California, but returned to his farm near Decatur, Ill. He was living there in 1860 when the State Republican Convention was held there. Richard J. Oglesby, later a Colonel and then a General in the Civil War and still later Governor of the State, invited John to ride with him to the site of the first Lincoln cabin in Illinois and identify what was left of the rail fence that he and Abraham had erected in 1831.

The rail incident, it may be well to remind the reader, did not occur at the National convention in Chicago, but at the State convention at Decatur, a week earlier, and the enthusiasm which it evoked spread throughout the nation. Decatur also had erected a "wigwam," a temporary structure used to house a large crowd, and it was there the State convention met. Richard J. Oglesby lived in Decatur and so did John Hanks, and the then obscure but soon-to-be famous rail fence was only ten miles away. To that fence Dick Oglesby and John Hanks drove one afternoon and returned in the twilight.

They brought back two rails, roped under the axles of Dick Oglesby's buggy, and the rails remained for a night or two in the Oglesby barn un-

Shoaff's Letter to Barrett.

Shelbyville, Illinois, October 1, 1930.

Mr. Oliver R. Barrett, Chicago, Illinois.—Dear Sir: Replying to your request concerning my Grandfather, Dennis F. Hanks, and how he became the owner of the Silver Watch you purchased from Mr. Gunther of museum fame, and paid \$1,000 for it, would say that said watch was given to Mr. Hanks by Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D. C. toward the close of the Civil War. At that time, my grandfather resided in the town of Coles County, Illinois.

In the year 1864, the Democrats were having a meeting at Charleston. Among those present was Dr. Shubel York, who was a medical official in the Union Army, at home on furlough. There was something said by Dr. York about the "Copper Heads" that caused anger and excitement and result in a riot, and Dr. York and two other persons were shot and killed by some unknown persons in the crowd. At that time Colonel Mitchell, commanding the 26th Illinois Regiment was quartered at Mattoon, Illinois, to watch movements of Democrats in Coles and Shelby Counties. Two companies of these soldiers had been sent to Shelbyville, and on the day of the riot a company was ordered to Charleston. Their presence at the meeting meant trouble, and resulted in the shooting of Dr. York and two other citizens. Several Democrats were afterwards arrested and charged with murder and riot. They were taken to a prison in Pennsylvania, and incarcerated there without trial, and held as prisoners until liberated by President Lincoln.

After peace was restored, the friends of these prisoners prevailed upon Dennis F. Hanks to go to Washington to see the President and petition for their liberty. These friends of the prisoners were wise men and used good tactics in selecting my grandfather to plead their cause. They knew that Dennis F. Hanks had influence in the community, that he was a cousin and life-long friend of Abraham Lincoln, and could come nearer moving him to clemency for those prisoners than any other person.

Dennis accepted the invitation, packed his old "carpet bag" and started out for Washington. On the

way he had occasion to change cars at Altoona, Pennsylvania. The large crowd of passengers made a rush for the train and jostled Dennis to such an extent that a group of gentlemen very courteously assisted him with his carpet bag up the steps to his car. Soon after the train started, Dennis discovered that all of his money and watch were gone, his pockets had been picked—nothing was left except his railroad ticket, sticking in his hat band.

On reaching Washington, he went directly to the Capital to see Mr. Lincoln. He rapped at the door of the White House, and was answered by a colored man in uniform, who asked Dennis who he wanted to see and Dennis asked him if President Lincoln was in. "Yes, Sir, have you a card?" No, Sir, tell Abe that Dennis Hanks of Illinois is out here and wants to see him." Presently he was admitted, and saw the President conversing with some of his cabinet officers. When Abe looked around and saw Dennis he walked straight to him and grasped his hand and told him how glad he was to see him. When the officers left the room and they were alone, they visited together and Dennis told Abe why he had come all of the way from home to see him. They talked of the war and the conditions in Illinois and around home, and after Dennis told his story, the President called a messenger and sent a telegram ordering the commandant of the prison to release the men who had been imprisoned since the Charleston riot, and set them

free. The prisoners who had been released reached Charleston before Dennis arrived home.

After the President has issued the order releasing the prisoners, Dennis told Abe of his being robbed on the train at Altoona, of his money and his watch. Lincoln turned around and took from his desk drawer an old silver watch that he had carried around over the State of Illinois, and from Springfield to Washington saying, "Dennis, you may have this watch. I have carried it a long time. Take it home and take care of it."

Abe then took from his vest pocket a beautiful gold watch, saying, "Some of my friends here in Washington did not think my old silver watch was good enough for a President to carry, and they gave me this one."

Several years after the war, Dennis moved from Charleston to Paris, Illinois, and lived with his daughter, Nancy Hanks Shoaff, she having been named after Dennis' relation, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother of Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Keefer, Laufman, a relative of the Shoaff family, was a boarder, and was Clerk of the County Court of Edgar County at Paris, Illinois, at that time. He advised Dennis F. Hanks to make a will and direct therein that at his death his old silver watch be sold and the proceeds thereof be used to defray the expenses of his funeral. At his death his will was probated in the County Court and recorded in the office of the county clerk of Edgar County at Paris, Illinois, where his estate was administered. By an order of said Court, Mrs. M. M. Shoaff Barney, a grand-daughter of Dennis, was authorized to make sale of the silver watch, and it was sold to Mr. Gunther of Chicago for \$500 who placed it on exhibition in the old Libby Prison Building, then being exhibited in Chicago in 1893, the year of the World's Fair.

Dennis F. Hanks was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, May 15, 1799, died at Paris, Illinois, October 21, 1892, aged 93 years and 5 months. He was buried at Charleston, Illinois.

He was truly a good man. He was the soul of honor. He was not illiterate as quoted by some who knew him least. He was well informed; he was truthful in every word and deed, only loquacious when interviewed. He was a mindful reader and student of the Bible. He affiliated with the Disciples of Christ and enjoyed discussing Religion.

THOS. B. SHOAF.

Perma Eagle 10-17-30

Statement by Thos. B. Shoaff

Concerning the Thirteen Persons in the Lincoln Migration from Indiana to Illinois in the Spring of 1930.

1. Thomas Lincoln, wife and children.

Thomas Lincoln, and Sarah Bush (Johnston) Lincoln, his wife, together with Abraham Lincoln, son of Thomas, and John D. Johnston, son of Sarah, making a family of 4 persons.

2. The Squire Hall Family.

Squire Hall, (son of Levi and Nancy Hall) and Matilda Johnston Hall his wife, daughter of Daniel and Sarah Johnston. ~~the latter subsequently the~~

wife of Thomas Lincoln, and their son, John Johnston Hall, 3 persons.

3. The Dennis Hanks Family.

T. B. Shoaff's grandparents, Dennis Hanks and Elizabeth Johnston Hanks and their four children: Sarah Jane Hanks, later Mrs. Thomas Dowling; Nancy Hanks, later Mrs. James Shoaff, mother of T. B. Shoaff; Harriet Hanks, later wife of Colonel Gus Chapman and John Talbot Hanks, 6 person.

All of the above-named persons were related to Nancy Hanks (2d) Shoafi, my mother.

THOS. B. SHOAFF.

Given before me 10-17-30.

December

1931

January 19, 1931

Mr. Thos. B. Shoaff
Shelbyville, Illinois

My dear Mr. Shoaff:

Will you please accept my thanks for your portrait which I am very glad to have as although I have never met you, I have known of you for sometime.

I am very glad indeed to get the Lincoln information which you furnished and I am also pleased to learn that you feel our Lincoln collection is worth giving notice in your paper.

Thanking you again for your kindness and generosity, I am

Respectfully yours,

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAW:LEH

10.

THE SHELBY COUNTY LEADER

THOS. B. SHOAFF & SON

EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS

1840-ESTABLISHED 90 YEARS-1930

Louis A. Warren
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Jan. 22, 1931

Dear Sir:

In writing you a short time ago, and
in an unguarded moment, sent the letter to
the postoffice. I hurriedly before having it copied
by the typewriter. For it I said something
about my wife that should have read, "This
"I transplanted one of Indiana's fair flowers
to the fertile soil of Illinois. You doubtless
noticed the blunder. I needn't. Thank you!
Glad you were pleased to receive the
Lincoln data I mailed you. Am mailing
you under separate cover a copy of today's
issue of the Leader containing the article
on your Lincoln memorial Centennial.
With errors corrected as the proof
I send you discloses

Respectfully yours

Thos. Benton Shoaff

January 24, 1931

Mr. Thos. Benton Shoaff
The Shelby County Leader
Shelbyville, Indiana

My dear Mr. Shoaff:

I am in receipt of your letter explaining the very natural error you made in one of your recent letters and also advising me that the copy of the Shelby County Leader was being forwarded.

The paper has arrived and I thank you for giving so much good space to our dedication.

Very sincerely yours,

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAF:LE

July 17, 1931

Mr. T. B. Shoaff
Shelbyville, Ill.

My dear Mr. Shoaff:

Please accept my thanks for the unique
broadside which I have just received under the
caption "Statement by Thos. B. Shoaff".

It is timely indeed considering the
discussion which is now on about the Lincoln
memorial highway.

Very sincerely yours,

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAW:MH
L. A. Warren

9-
THE SHELBY COUNTY LEADER

THOS. B. SHOAFF & SON

EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS

1840-ESTABLISHED 90 YEARS-1930

Aug 16, '31

Louis A. Warren
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Sir and Friend:

Yes, I will be greatly pleased
to have you send me Copies of
"The Linker Lore", as you suggest.

By the way, I noticed your
article in the State Historical
Magazine and copied part of it
in my newspaper. Think I will
send you a Copy this week.

With kind regards.

I am very truly yours.

Thos B Shoaff

August 20, 1931

Mr. Thomas B. Shoaff
The Shelby County Leader
Shelbyville, Illinois

My dear Mr. Shoaff:

We will be very glad indeed to place your name on our mailing list to receive Lincoln Lore and you are at perfect liberty to make extracts from it for your paper whenever you feel that there are timely articles.

Thank you for sending me the Shelby County Leader but I must admit I did not notice the article copied from the Illinois Magazine but did clip the fine editorial about "Leave Lincoln Alone."

If you have another copy of this paper available I should like very much to have it.

Very sincerely yours,

LAW:VY

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

Dennis Hanks Dowling

Service Book May 8 '31
Dennis Hanks Dowling, Springfield, was born April 21, 1854, in Charleston, Illinois, the son of Thomas and Sarah Jane Hanks Dowling. He is the grandson of the late Dennis Hanks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Dowling has the distinction of being one of the best posted men living having a knowledge of the life of Abraham Lincoln. His scrap books are well known for the authentic information they contain about Mr. Lincoln.

Mr. Dowling received his education in the Charleston schools and studied law for a time. He has served the public in various capacities, having been at one time deputy sheriff of Coles County, assistant to the postmaster at Charleston, deputy

circuit clerk of Coles County and was also employed for a period of twelve years as a state employee at Springfield.

In August, 1919, he entered the service of the Company, being employed in the Accounting Department where he remained until placed on the Service Annuity Roll in August, 1930.—C. I. P. S. Co. News.

KIN OF LINCOLN

IN CITY TODAY

ILL. STATE JOURNAL

Four brothers, T. B. Shoaff, Shelbyville, L. A. G. and F. L. Shoaff of Paris, and Douglas Shoaff, Mattoon, grandsons of Dennis F. Hanks, cousin of Abraham Lincoln, and great grandsons of Sarah Bush Johnson, stepmother of Lincoln, will attend the rededication ceremonies at the tomb today.

T. B. Shoaff, 84, the eldest of the brothers, is dean of Illinois newspaper publishers, and perhaps the oldest printer actively engaged in "sticking type" in the United States. For 70 years continuously he has set type and for 66 years has been a newspaper publisher. The youngest of the brothers, J. Douglas, is 59, and all four are printers of the old school.

VISIT TO KENTUCKY

Not long since, the senior editor of the Shelby County Leader in company with his three bothers, had the pleasure of an automobile trip to Kentucky by way of Vincennes, Indiana. Thence through the picturesque hills, mostly by cement and gravel roads to West Baden Springs where we rested a short time quenching our thirst from the celebrated springs known by tourists for its "healing" qualities and "fragrant" odor. From there we went to Jeffersonville, Indiana; visited Mrs. Charles Booth, our sister, for a time before journeying to Hodgenville, Kentucky, where Abraham Lincoln and his cousin Dennis F. Hanks were born. On the public square of this beautifully situated town of 15,00 inhabitants, is located the Lincoln Memorial Statue, erected from appropriations of \$2,500.00 by the State of Kentucky, \$10,000.00 by the Congress of the United States, supplemented by private subscriptions to the amount of several thousand dollars. It was unveiled May 31, 1909, on which occasion the principal address was made by Henry Watterson.

LINCOLN LOG CABIN

Two and one-half miles south of Hodgenville, on the Jackson Highway, is the shrine, sheltering the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born. Property of the United States and under control of the War Department. Open to visitors every day of the year. The Lincoln Farm, on which the Memorial Building stands, consists of 110 acres, and is part of a tract of 300 acres which was owned by Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, from December 1818 until 1816. It was conveyed to the Lincoln Memorial Association in 1907. The building was erected at a cost of about a quarter of a million dollars. The corner stone was laid by President Roosevelt on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1909, and the building was dedicated by President Taft on Nov. 9, 1911. The property was turned over to the United States in the year 1916, together with an endowment fund of about \$50,000.00 for its upkeep, and was received by the Secretary of

War, with an address by President Woodrow Wilson, on Sept. 4, 1916.

We are under obligation to Mr. C. M. Mather, of Hodgenville for the above information, and the kindness shown us while entertained at his home. Mr. Mather is not only interested in Lincolnia, but stands high in the practice of law. Not long since he delivered a Memorial Address at the tomb of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, mother of Abraham Lincoln, near Lincoln City, Spencer county, Indiana.

LIFE OF LINCOLN

As a seeker for new facts pertaining to Lincoln's life, the late Dr. William E. Barton was indefatigable, says Lewis A. Warren, Director Lincoln Historical Research Foundation. "No trip was too long, no trouble too great if it seemed likely to result in new information. His books, and particularly his brochures, are evidence of this propensity. In the years which have elapsed since the publication of the Nicolay and Hay and Tarbell biographies, no one has approached Doctor Barton in the discovery of hitherto unknown material on Lincoln's life. * * It is not likely that anything of importance will ever be added to his researches on Lincoln's paternity and religion. Biographers will continue to reinterpret Lincoln's life, but their work will be permanently lightened in those fields to which Doctor Barton turned his particular attention."

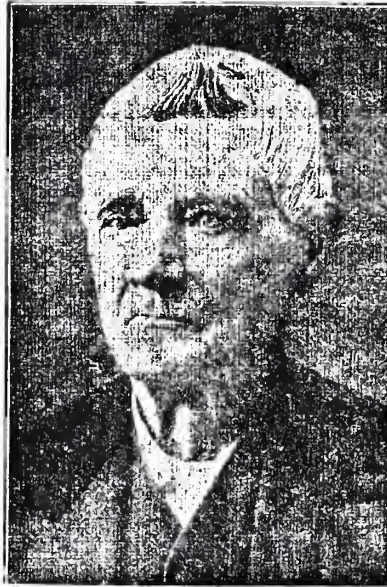
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Shelbyville, Ind. July 13 - 1931

TAKE A VACATION

The vacation season is again at hand and everyone should take a vacation. The old saying, "All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy," is still as true as ever. Nothing pays bigger than a rest from your daily duties, a change of scene and a relaxation under unusual conditions. Many a man and woman has been spared a break-down and saved big doctor bills by going away on a vacation. The dividends in renewed health far exceed the expense of a trip. In addition to the benefit to health a change of scene will broaden your view of life and shake you out of the rut into which you may have fallen. In this day of the automobile, good roads and pleasant and inexpensive tourists' camps a considerable journey may be undertaken at small expense. Go into another state or country, ride through the mountains and valleys, visit distant towns and cities. You will come back with a new viewpoint, a keener appreciation of your home. See how other people live and you will find a new joy in your own home and your own job. Yes, it pays to take a vacation and you owe it to yourself to get out of the rut. People who remain in one spot grow stale and narrow. They miss much of the real joy of living. So tune up the old bus and join the merry caravan on the highway. Go away from home for a little while and then experience the joys of getting back. Take a vacation!



DENNIS F. HANKS' LETTER COPIED IN TYPE

April the 22nd 1866.

Dennis F. Hanks was Born in Hardin County on the tributary Branch of the South Fork of Nolin on the old Richard Creal farm in the old peach orchard in a log cabin 3 miles from Hodgenville, thence we moved to Mercer County and staid there about 3 years and moved back again to the same place and there remained until we moved to Spencer County Indiana. This was I think in the year 1816 if my memory serves we rite. My mother and Abes Mothers Mother war sisters. My Mothers name was Nancy Hanks. Abes Grand Mother was Lucy Hanks which was Mothers sister. The woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparow the sister of Lucy and Nancy. The other Sister her name was Polly Friend. So you see that there was 4 sisters that was Hankses.

I have no letter from my friends yet. I dont no the reason. Billy did you write to William Hall in Missouri, Frankford. I think he could tell you something that would be rite. He is my half brother try him.

William I have seen a book which states that Lincolns war quakers. I say this is a mistake they war Baptist. All this talk about their Religious talk is a humbug. They try to make them out Puritans. This is not the case.

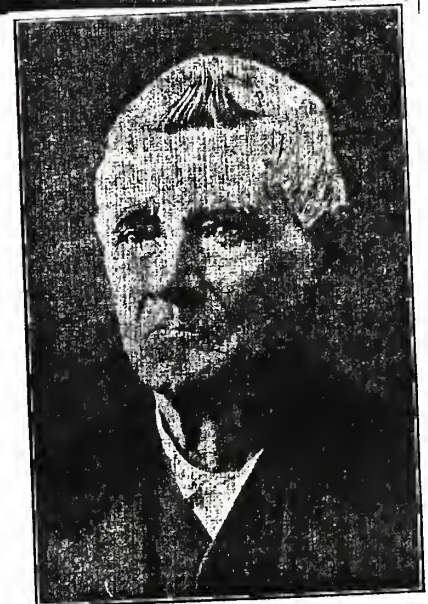
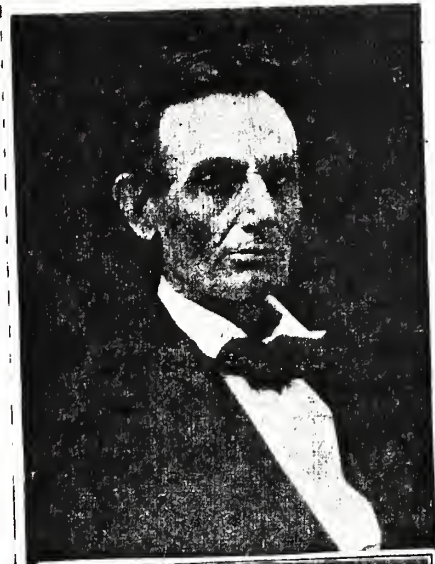
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Did you find out from Richard Creal if He lived on the place A. Lincoln was Born or not. I am going there in May to visit my birth place the 15th of May, this is my Birth Day 1799. It has been 48 years sence.

D. F. HANKS

My first school master was by the name of Warden, taught school at the old Baptist Church on Nolin near Brunk's farm at the Big Spring down in a deep hollow close to the house.

Shelby Co. Reader 7-30-31



VISIT TO KENTUCKY

Not long since, the senior editor of the Shelby County Leader in company with his three brothers, had the pleasure of an automobile trip to Kentucky by way of Vincennes, Indiana. Thence through the picturesque hills, mostly by cement and gravel roads to West Baden Springs where we rested a short time quenching our thirst from the celebrated springs known by tourists for its "healing" qualities and "fragrant" odor. From there we went to Jeffersonville, Indiana; visited Mrs. Charles Booth, our sister, for a time before journeying to Hodgenville, Kentucky, where Abraham Lincoln and his cousin, Dennis F. Hanks were born. On the public square of this beautifully situated town of 15,00 inhabitants, is located the Lincoln Memorial Statue, erected from appropriations of \$2,500.00 by the State of Kentucky, \$10,000.00 by the Congress of the United States, supplemented by private subscriptions to the amount of several thousand dollars. It was unveiled May 31, 1909, on which occasion the principal address was made by Henry Watterson.

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7/30/1931

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My first school master was by the name of Warden, taught school at the old Baptist Church on Nolin near Brunk's farm at the Big Spring down in a deep hollow close to the house.

Here's Latest Claimant to "Oldest Editor" Title—He's Also a Relative of Lincoln

Publication in The Auxiliary of the claims advanced in behalf of George Granville Putnam of Salem, Mass., and W. Lester Watson of Kennebunk, Maine, as being "the oldest actively engaged newspaper men in the country in point of continuous service" has brought forth another claimant to that title. He is Thomas B. Shoaff, eighty-four, of the Shelby County Leader at Shelbyville, Ill., for 70 years a printer and for 64 years a newspaper publisher.

Mr. Shoaff is the eldest of four brothers, all of whom are printers. The others are L. A. G. Shoaff and Fred L. Shoaff of Paris, Ill., and J. Douglas Shoaff of Mattoon, Ill. The latter was 70 years old in August of this year.



T. B. Shoaff.

The four brothers are grandsons of Dennis Hanks (cousin of Abraham Lincoln) and great-grandsons of Sarah Bush-Johnston-Lincoln (stepmother of Lincoln).

Thomas B. Shoaff is an authority on Lincoln genealogy and he recently printed for distribution among his friends a leaflet illustrated with a cut of his grandfather, Dennis Hanks, and containing some interesting information about Hanks and the Lincoln family.

In it is this statement about a letter written by Dennis Hanks, which says:

"A short time before Doctor Barton's death from pneumonia he visited friends in Shelbyville, and during his visit, presented the Shoaff family with a phototype letter, written by our grandfather, Dennis F. Hanks, to an inquiring friend, dated April 22, 1866, one year after Lincoln's death. We give it in words as he wrote it. Dennis Hanks was the soul of honor. He was not illiterate as quoted by some persons who knew him least. He was truthful in every word and deed —only loquacious when interviewed, a reader and student of the Bible. This, as I knew him when he lived with his daughter, Mrs. James Shoaff, Paris, Illinois, where he died at the age of ninety-three years."

The letter to which he refers reads as follows:

"April the 22nd 1866.

"Dennis F. Hanks was Born in Hardin County on the tributary Branch of the South Fork of Nolin on the old Richard Creal farm in the old peach orchard in a log cabin 3 miles from Hodgenville, thence we moved to Mercer County and staid there about 3 years and moved baek again to the same place and there remained until we moved to Spencer County Indiana. This was I think in the year 1816 if my memory serves me rite. My mother and Abes Mothers Mother war sisters. My Mothers name was Naney Hanks. Abes Grand Mother was Luey Hanks which was Mothers sister. The woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparow the sister of Lucy and Nancy. The other Sister her name was Polly Friend. So you see that there was 4 sisters that was Hankses.

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(Continued on Page Seven.)

Prof. L. A. G. Shoaff
10/12/31

66-12-31

SHELBY COUNTY LEADER

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

T. B. SHOAFF & SON
Editors and Publishers.



50TH ANNIVERSARY

IS GRANDSON OF DENNIS F. HANKS

Thomas Benton Shoaff is a grandson of Dennis F. Hanks, who was a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, and a great grandson of Sarah Bush Johnston, Abraham Lincoln's step-mother, and it was recently the privilege of Mr. Shoaff to settle a dispute that has long agitated the minds of Lincoln Historians, as to what disposition was made of Lincoln's first log-cabin home in Illinois. An original photo of the cabin, in Mr. Shoaff's possession, together with his affidavit that the cabin was exhibited on the Boston Common by John and Dennis Hanks and James Shoaff, his father, gave definite direction to a new search concerning the lost history of the cabin. Thereafter news items of the day, discovered in a search of Boston newspapers by the late Dr. Wm. E. Barton together with an excerpt from the official records of the city council of Boston, show the granting of a permit for the cabin display and the names of some who visited the cabin at that time, and thus, it is proven that the cabin was exhibited on Boston Common in July, 1865, three months after the assassination of President Lincoln. The cabin was later sold to an English syndicate and was lost at sea en-route to Europe.

+ + - +

...commander.

**First Editor's
Son Succum**
Decatur (Ill.) Sunday Herald and Review
March 13-1938.

**Father of Fred Shoaff
Founded Gazette Here**

Fred Shoaff, 79, son of the man who published the first newspaper in Decatur, died Friday in his home in Paris. He was publisher of the Paris Gazette there from 1889 to 1929, and was a native of Decatur.

His father, James Shoaff, was editor and publisher of the Decatur Weekly Gazette which made its first appearance here on June 26, 1851. The paper was continued by him until 1859 when he sold it. He later went to Bement and at the close of the Civil war returned to Decatur where he purchased the Decatur Magnet. He published that paper until 1872, when he went to Paris and founded The Gazette. In the year 1858 he served Decatur as its third mayor.

Fred Shoaff's mother was formerly Nancy Melvina Hanks, said to be a first cousin of Abraham Lincoln.



The Lincoln Kinsman

Number 46

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April, 1942

CHARLES FRIEND'S NOTES

HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH WILLIAM HERNDON AND LINCOLN'S RELATIVES

The chief sources of information originating with the Hanks relatives of Abraham Lincoln came from John Hanks, Charles Hanks, Dennis Friend Hanks and Charles Friend. The reminiscence of the first three informants has been discussed in previous issues of the *Kinsman* and now we have before us the testimony of Charles Friend. The first three mentioned witnesses were contemporaries of Abraham Lincoln and part of what they remembered was from personal observation. Two of these three men, John and Dennis, were interviewed by William Herndon and through him much of what they reported was made known to the public.

Little attention has been paid to the collection of folklore and tradition about the Hanks family and Abraham Lincoln's paternity gathered by Charles Friend, although what he had to say about the parentage of the President was given serious consideration by Robert Todd

Lincoln, and the secretaries of the President, Nicolay and Hay.

Although Charles Friend was about forty years younger than Dennis and John, and represents the generation associated with the children of the President, Herndon also interviewed Charles and had considerable correspondence with him over a period of twenty years or more. Charles Friend lived long enough so that the editor of the *Lincoln Kinsman* also had the opportunity of interviewing him. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has copies of several letters which passed between him and both Herndon and Nicolay.

Charles Friend was twenty years of age when Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President of the United States but he was not born until thirty-two years after the birth of Abraham Lincoln. He may be considered nothing more than a gatherer of family and community reminiscences. Certainly he had no firsthand evidence

on anything he wrote about the Kentucky Lincolns whom apparently he had never seen.

Although Friend had no personal contacts with Abraham Lincoln, he did live most of his life in the county where the President was born. Here he recorded the gossip of the community much of which was not fit to print and most all of it he made available to William Herndon.

*Early Correspondence with
Herndon*

It is apparent from the first letter which William Herndon wrote to Charles Friend on February 6, 1866, that the correspondence between the two men was begun by Herndon. He introduced himself as the law partner of Lincoln for twenty years and asked Friend, "Will you correspond with me a few times in relation to Mr. Lincoln and his family?" and he then put these questions to him:

"Where did the Lincolns come from and how did they write their names 80 years ago.

"Did the Lincolns ever live in Pennsylvania? Did they come from England to Virginia or Pennsylvania. Were they Quakers or british.

"What County did Abram Lincoln's grand father settle in in Ky. Bullit or what County. About what year did he die.

"When Was Ab'm. Lincoln, Pres'd't, born—how far from Hodgenville,—what direction from Tenn. Did Thomas Lincoln live on one or two farms after the birth of A. Lincoln. What made Thomas Lincoln leave Ky.—was it slavery—was it poverty—was it for some offence.

"What County in Va. did the Hanks and Lincolns come from and what

year and where did they first settle?"

Friend immediately replied to this letter but apparently failed to answer the many questions propounded. He did however, put some questions to Herndon and we are fortunate in having a copy of the Herndon reply in which Friend's questions are answered. The letter follows in full.

"Springfield, Ill. Feb. 15, 1866.

"Mr. Friend.

"My Dear Sir:

"Your kind letter dated the 12th of this month handed to me and for which I am much obliged. I thank you for your promptness. You ask me some questions. Who was Dennis Hanks' mother? She was the sister of Thomas Lincoln's first wife and Mother of A. Lincoln, President. Her maiden name was Nancy Hanks. Called Nancy Sparrow. A. Lincoln and Dennis Hanks as I understand it are cousins.

"The father of Mrs. Lincoln, Abms. mother—was named Henry Sparrow and his wife's name was Lucy Sparrow. This information will give you the clew to all I want it is hoped. If it does not please write to me and I will write to Hanks and see if he knows more.

"Your friend,

"W. H. Herndon."

This reply of William Herndon to Charles Friend is of very great importance in consideration of what followed. As late as the date of the letter just quoted, February 15, 1866, Herndon was under the impression that the mother of Dennis Hanks and the mother of Abraham Lincoln were sisters and he so wrote Charles Friend. Herndon knew that Lincoln's mother was named Nancy Hanks and it was known that Dennis Hanks' mother

was also a Nancy Hanks which made Charles Friend conclude that instead of there being two sisters, each named Nancy, that the mother of the President and the mother of Dennis were one and the same person. We will observe that while Herndon changed his mind, Dennis stuck to it.

While it is evident Herndon was confused about the cousinship relation between Dennis and the President, there is no excuse for the statement he made when he concluded, "The father of Mrs. Lincoln, Abms. mother, was Henry Sparrow." Later on Herndon claimed that as early as 1850 Abraham Lincoln told him during the famous buggy ride episode that his own mother was an illegitimate and that the father of her child was unknown. If William Herndon fifteen years before had learned from Lincoln's own lips that his mother was illegitimate why should he speak so positively about the Henry Sparrow parentage?

In the letters which Herndon wrote to Friend during the next year or so the subject of Lincoln's mother is never again mentioned with the assumption that Herndon was willing to leave the question as stated in his letter of February 15.

Although Herndon must have known that Charles Friend was not born until thirty-two years after the President's birth and twenty-five years after the Lincolns left the country, the correspondence that passed between Herndon and Friend largely had to do with the early part of Lincoln's life about which Friend could not have had any firsthand evidence. Herndon persists in putting questions to him in subsequent letters written February 28, March 28 and November

30, 1866 respectively, relative to Lincoln's boyhood days.

It was largely on such hearsay evidence as Charles Friend could gather from the Kentucky neighbors that Herndon wrote his supposedly authentic stories about Lincoln's childhood days.

Early Correspondence with Dennis Hanks

Just how early the correspondence between Dennis Hanks and Charles Friend began we cannot say, but by the month of March, 1866 they were writing to each other. The contents of the letter written by Dennis on March 25, 1866 reveals that Dennis had been in correspondence with other members of the Friend family. The letter follows in part:

"March 25, 1866.

"Dear Charles:

"I have written a letter to your Uncle Robert which I enclosed two of my pictures. This was in February. I have got no answer from him about them. He told me write and mail my letter to Buffalo, Larue Co. and he would get it. So I have no answer about it I may be mistaken about the place. Where is Buffalo, Charles, for I know all them places in that Country. Charles is Jeny Hanks your grandmother's sister alive and is John and Conrad Hanks alive yet? Is Philip Creal's widow living yet or his first little boy? Is the old Lunderner poplar a standing yet? I was born in 30 steps of that tree in the old peach orchard. . . .

"No whither your Uncle Robert got my picture or not.

"Your relative & well wisher,

"Dennis F. Hanks.

The Lincoln Kinsman

Published Monthly by
LINCOLNIANA PUBLISHERS
 Box 1110—Fort Wayne, Ind.

**EDITOR**

DR. LOUIS A. WARREN,
 Director, Lincoln National Life Foundation

BUSINESS MANAGER

MAURICE A. COOK

Annual Subscription.....\$2.00
 Single Copies......25

"My mother was a Hanks. She says that your grand father was my father. This don't doubt."

The chief value of this letter is in the family relationship it reviews and also in the statement about the place where Dennis was born and raised, but contributes nothing to our knowledge of Lincoln.

Correspondence with John Nicolay

Possibly the most important correspondence which Charles Friend received from various biographers was the letter from Lincoln's secretary, John Nicolay. Apparently Dennis Hanks had sent one of the letters he had received from Charles Friend to Robert Lincoln, son of the President, and in turn Robert passed it on to Nicolay. Because of the importance of this letter it is printed in full.

"Chicago, Ill. July 26, 1873.

"Chas. Friend, Esq.,

"Hodgenville, Ky.

"My Dear Sir:

"I take the liberty of introducing myself to you, as having formerly been the private Secretary of Pres. Lincoln, deceased, from the time of his nomination until his death; and as the friend of the family I wish to make some inquiries through your

kindness concerning the early history of Pres. Lincoln's parents.

"Mr. Robert T. Lincoln, son of the late President, whom I am visiting here for a day or two, has shown me a letter of yours under date of 26th June last, written to your Uncle, Mr. Dennis F. Hanks, which the latter forwarded to Mr. Robert T. Lincoln. In the letter you mentioned that Pres. Lincoln's father and mother were married by a Mr. Alexander McDougal and that a daughter of this preacher (Mrs. Elizabeth Middleton by name) is still living, who was present at the wedding.

"Now I wish to inquire of you the address of Mrs. Middleton, and where she lives; her age now; and when the wedding occurred; and in short, all the details of the event, as fully as she may be able to recollect them.

"Would it be possible for you to visit Mrs. Middleton and write down from her own words a full and complete statement of the whole affair, and ask her to sign and authenticate it in some formal manner?

"And if you could do this for me, would you also please make as full inquiries as possible through her whether any record was ever made of this marriage, or whether the original license or some paper concerning it might not still be found among her father's papers or some record in some family bible in the neighborhood.

"If you will please take the trouble and time to do this for me, you will not only oblige myself and Pres. Lincoln's family and friends here, but I would cheerfully reimburse you for any travelling or other expenses it might cause you.

"Please address your reply to me

here, care of Mr. Robert T. Lincoln, as I shall remain in the West some two months, although my regular address is at Washington City according to the card I enclose.

"Your ob't. serv't.,

"Jno. G. Nicolay."

This Nancy Hanks mentioned by Charles Friend however, was not the mother of Lincoln, but the mother of Dennis Hanks who did later on marry Levi Hall in the community where Abraham Lincoln was born. This wedding added confusion to the already muddled story of the Nancy Hankses, and it is not known whether or not Mr. Nicolay was able to straighten out the confusion.

Later Correspondence with Herndon

Herndon's first correspondence with Charles Friend had taken place in 1866 and now twenty-three years later letters again passed between them. Friend wrote to Herndon on July 17, 1889, but the contents of the letter are not known, although it is apparent from Herndon's reply on August 2 that it had something to do with the post-office appointment at Sonora, Kentucky.

In the meantime Friend had written another letter to Herndon dated July 31 and brought up again the stories of Lincoln's illegitimacy then in circulation in Kentucky. He had secured from Abraham Enlow the denial of the story that he was the father of Abraham Lincoln. The rest of the letter is so loathsome that its contents are unprintable in the *Kinsman*.

Herndon replied to Friend's letter of July 31 on August 10 and ten days later Friend wrote Herndon another letter of the same general character

as the first in which he tried to confirm his theory that Nancy Hanks, mother of Dennis Friend Hanks, was also the mother of Abraham Lincoln, and implied that Dennis may have been a full brother of Abraham Lincoln.

The chief value of this later correspondence with Herndon is to reveal what the citizens of the community where Lincoln was born were thinking with respect to his paternity as late as 1889.

On January 23, 1890, Herndon wrote to Jesse Weik and made this reference to Charles Friend, "There are some papers from Charles Friend of Kentucky about Nancy Hanks, Thomas Lincoln. From this man's testimony it appears that there was but one Nancy Hanks and if that is so, then Thomas Lincoln married Dennis Hanks' mother. Read what Charles Friend says. Probably no attention need be paid to it though file away the papers as evidence."

Later Correspondence with Dennis Hanks

The renewal of correspondence with Herndon also opened the way for further correspondence to pass between Friend and Dennis Hanks. On August 1, 1889 Friend wrote to Dennis who was then 90 years old, and received a reply dated August 10, but apparently written by someone else for Dennis. Excerpts from this letter follows.

"Charleston, Ill. Aug. 12, '89.

"Charles Friend,

"Sonora, Hardin Co., Ky.

"My Dear Nephew:

"Your welcome and unexpected letter of August the first reached me

in due season. . . . I was surprised to learn that you met the Hon. W. H. Herndon and from him learned where I was. I thought you already knew. I was surprised to learn that my brothers and sisters were living. . . . Your grandmother has made a mistake. I never lived with them. I lived with my Uncle and Aunt Betsy Sparrow and was raised by them. Now Charles I can state to you how your Grand Mother made the mistake. We lived on the South fork of the Nolin and you lived on a little branch called SinKing Run, 'near the South Fork of Nolin'. . . .

"Yes, Uncle Jessie and Aunt Polly moved to this State and settled near Paris, Edgar Co., which joins this Co. (Coles) on the East, his body is buried there. Aunt Polly is dead. Lucy Friend married a man named Hatfield and they moved with them to Paris, they then returned to Ky. . . . I have men and women from all parts of the country to see. Newspaper correspondents have written me up time and again. My picture been taken and inserted in all the leading papers. My connection with the great emancipator has given me a lasting fame, 'so that after life's fitful fever is over' children, generations to come will read, think and ponder over the name of him who writes you now. My children 13—out that number I raised 8 and 6 are living, the oldest Jane Dowling is going on 68 and the youngest Theopelus Hanks is 41. John F. Hanks and his wife have 10 children, 2 grand children, they live in Oregon. Below is my signature.

"P. S.

"Who owns the place at the farm that Uncle Abraham Lincoln was born and all about the place, how the

land is used and if it has been farmed and who by.

"D. F. Hanks."

*Correspondence with Mrs.
Hitchcock*

When Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock was gathering material on the Hanks family she got in touch with Charles Friend in 1895. He wrote two letters to her, one on November 26, and the other on December 6, both written from Madisonville, Kentucky. An excerpt from the November 26 letter is noted.

"The Dennis Hanks you wrote me about is my Uncle a Son of Charles Friend my Grand-Father. His mother was Nancy Hanks the mother of A. Lincoln President of this U. S. A. There was 4 of the Hanks girls that came to Kentucky from Virginia and settled in Hardin Co, My Grand Uncle Jessie Friend married Mary Hanks or as She was known by my Father as Aunt Polly Friend. Nancy Hanks after Uncle Dennis was a few years old Married Thomas Lincoln. A. Lincoln' Father and A Lincoln was born of this marriage 2½ miles South of Hodgenville LaRue Co then Hardin Co. LaRue was formed in 1844 by Cutting a portion of Hardin and one or two other Counties, one of the other girls married Levy Hall a club footed tailor and the other married Thomas Sparrow Thomas Lincoln procured his marriage license in Springfield Ky. Abe Lincoln lived on Knob Creek until the families all removed from Ky to Indiana until Dennis went with Aunt Polly Friend and they reared him. He lived a great part of his life in Coles Co Ill but died 3 years ago at Paris Ill."

The letter written in December con-

firmed much that was written in the previous correspondence but does rather imply that Friend was coming to the conclusion that Thomas Lincoln was the father of the President. Although he held tenaciously that there was but one Nancy Hanks, he admitted that Thomas had secured a license to marry Nancy Hanks in a different court from the one in which the Nancy of Hardin County was then living.

The Hanks' Relatives of Friend

The editor of the *Lincoln Kinsman* interviewed Charles Friend in Hardin County, Kentucky on November 26, 1921 and secured his duly authorized affidavit with respect to his family and several traditions relating to the Lincolns. The following excerpt concerning his family history is copied from an affidavit signed by Friend.

The affiant Mr. Charles Friend after being duly sworn upon his oath states; "My name is Charles Friend, I was born in Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Ky. on Jan. 20, 1841 and have lived in Larue practically all of my life. My father's name was Feilding Friend and he was the son of Charles Friend, my grandfather, for whom I was named. Grandfather Charles Friend married Sarah Huss, Nov. 19, 1804 and nine children were born to this union as follows; Harriet, born March 15, 1805; Fielding, born July 12, 1806; Kitty, born Dec. 21, 1809; John, born March 10, 1811; Lydia; Robert, born May, 1818; Richard, born 1808; Matilda, born 1814, Elza, born 1837. My grandfather also had three brothers Isaac, Jesse and Andrew. Jesse Friend married Mary (Polly) Hanks, a sister of Nancy

Hanks who married Thomas Lincoln.

The affiant further states; "In correspondence with Dennis Friend Hanks some years before he died, he told me that my grandfather Charles Friend, was his father, and that his mother was a Hanks, 'this do not doubt.' He also said that he was reared by his Aunt Elizabeth Sparrow and Thomas Sparrow. Elizabeth Sparrow being an own sister of Nancy Hanks. It has been said that my grandfather married a Nancy Sparrow, but I have never heard any one in the family even suggest it. Neither have I heard the name of Lucy Hanks, mentioned, by the old people, whom some say was the sister of Elizabeth, Polly or Mary, and Nancy Hanks, and the mother of another Nancy Hanks who married Thomas Lincoln."

Affiant further states; "Judge Jonathan Friend Cesna once spoke of a Levi Hall, whom he called 'the club-footed tailor,' as having married one of the Hanks women, but he never knew which one."

Affiant further states; "One day in Hodgenville Abraham Enlow, who had been advertised as the father of President Lincoln, was in my brother-in-law's store, in which I was a clerk. My brother-in-law A. H. Redman in the presence of Dr. William H. Holt and myself, asked Uncle Abe Enlow this question by permission of Mr. Enlow; 'Are you the father of Abe Lincoln President of the United States?' he answered; 'I am not, I was only 15 years old when Abe was born and Nancy Hanks his mother was a grown woman. I believe A. Lincoln to be the son of Thomas Lincoln the husband of Nancy Hanks, but should he be illegitimate, he might

have been the son of Charles Friend by whom she bore her first child Dennis Friend Hanks. I am satisfied that he was not the son of said Friend, for the reason that the Friends were of Penn. Dutch descent, set low of stature, and Abe was tall the very opposite.' "

Chas Friend (sig)

"State of Ky

"County of Hardin

"Subscribed and sworn before me this 26 day of Nov 1921 by Chas Friend.

"David B. Lewis
"Notary Public
"H. C."

Grandfather Charles Friend before his marriage to Sarah Huss was responsible for the paternity of Dennis Friend Hanks whose mother was a Nancy Hanks. This relation was a well-known fact in the community as the middle name of Dennis implies. Previous to the birth of Dennis, Jesse Friend, a brother of Charles Friend, Sr. had married Mary or Polly Hanks, a sister of the Nancy Hanks who became the mother of Dennis, so that there was intermarriage between the Friends and Hankses as early as (1796) and it is likely that Dennis was born in the home of Jesse and Mary Hanks Friend.

Not only was the old grandfather, Charles Friend responsible for the

paternity of Dennis Friend Hanks, but he was apparently the father of another illegitimate child born to Nancy Riley on November 7, 1802. Miss Riley made oath to this fact on February 8, 1803 before Isom Enlow a justice of the peace in Hardin County on February 8, 1803 as is evident from the county records (Judgments and other papers, Jan. 1809 to Jan. 1811).

This very frank statement about the character of the grandfather, Charles Friend, is presented because the inference is often drawn and usually stressed by William Herndon that the Hanks family should bear the burden of the blame for moral delinquency. It appears in this case at least that the seducer of Dennis Hanks' mother was by reputation the most to be censured.

Undoubtedly the correspondence of Charles Friend with William Herndon in 1866 contributed greatly to the theory of Lincoln's illegitimacy which Herndon accepted. It is doubtful if Charles Friend in all of his correspondence was able to contribute one single fact with reference to Lincoln's parentage, nativity, or childhood, although Herndon wrote to him on August 2, 1889, "It is very true that you gave me much and great information in gathering up the facts of Mr. Lincoln's life in LaRue County, Kentucky."



SHELBY C. CHAPMAN
Box 340, MARIETTA, GA.

March 11, 1955.

Dr. Louis A. Warren,
Lincoln Foundation,
Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Doctor Warren:

I write to ask that you be
so kind as to send me copies of your "Lincoln Kins-
men" at 25¢ each, as follows:-


1. Dennis Friend Hanks
2. Roanoke River Hanks Colony
3. Southern Branch of Hankses
4. Nottaway River Hankses
5. Charles Friend notes

It may be of interest to you
that I am the grandson of Harriet Hanks Chapman of
Charleston, Illinois, (daughter of Dennis Hanks).
I am trying to trace my ancestry back and beyond
Dennis Hanks, who, I understand, was an old bastard.
I enclose my check for \$1.25.

Very truly yours,


Shelby C. Chapman

SCC*hs

Would you like an original photo of
Harriet Hanks I took in 1915?


March 22, 1955

Mr. Shelby C. Chapman
Box 340
Marietta, Ga.

My dear Mr. Chapman:

I regret indeed that most of the pamphlets you request have already been exhausted and only two of them are available which I am pleased to send you. You will also find a copy of Lincoln Lore which may assist you somewhat in your attempt to locate your ancestry.

I am returning the check that you enclosed and if you will kindly forward a picture of Harriet Hanks which you took in 1915 it will more than reimburse us for the enclosures which we have made.

Very truly yours,

LAW:WMC
enc.

Director



SHELBY C. CHAPMAN
Box 340, MARIETTA, GA.

March 25, 1955.

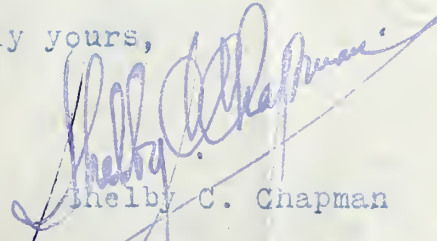
Dr. Louis A. Warren,
Lincoln National Life,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren:

Thank you very much for
your kind letter of the 22nd, with enclosures.
I'm truly sorry to learn that so many of the
booklets are out of print. Thank you, too, for
returning my check. I am very pleased to enclose
the picture of Harriet Hanks Chapman taken at
her home in Charleston, Ill., on June 11, 1915.

I note your belief that Nancy
Hanks, mother of Lincoln, was the daughter of
James Hanks and Lucy Shipley, rather than being
the illegitimate daughter of Lucy Hanks, daughter
of Joseph and Ann Hanks, as claimed by Barton.
Is there any proof of this, or authority I may
consult? Thank you for your co-operation.

Very truly yours,


Shelby C. Chapman

SCC*hs





MRS. HARRIET HANKS CHAPMAN
(and daughter ELLA)
at home in Charleston, Ill.



PHOTO TAKEN
JUNE 11, 1915, BY

Shelby Chapman
(GRANDSON)

April 1, 1955

Mr. Shelby C. Chapman
Box 340
Marietta, Ga.

My dear Mr. Chapman:

The only proof we have of the marriage of James Hanks and Lucy Shipley is in the correspondence of the Shipley family where several independent sources indicate that Lucy Shipley married James Hanks. There is no documentary proof of it although the families did live side by side in Bedford County where both of the names of the families appear on the It is my own feeling that this tradition is correct and that eventually we may be able to find some positive evidence of documentary form.

Very truly yours,

LAW:WC

Director

(17)

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Old Paris Newspaper Recalls Interview

Dennis Hanks, Kin Of Lincoln, Lived In Paris, Died Here

By NED JENISON

Beacon-News Staff Reporter

Today is the 150th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, and as such is being celebrated in Springfield, Washington, and many other communities in which Lincoln lived or visited.

Lincoln's ties with Edgar county and Paris while serving as a lawyer following the judge of the Springfield circuit as he made the rounds of east central Illinois counties, has been frequently reported on the anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

Less well known is the fact that a relative and friend of Lincoln from his birth through pre-Civil War days was a Paris resident, and lived in the former Shoaff home at 418 West Madison street at his death in 1892.

He was Dennis F. Hanks, a cousin of Abe Lincoln, the man who reportedly helped teach Lincoln to read and write.

Paris Attorney John Moss, interested in Edgar county history, has preserved an interview with Dennis Hanks made in May, 1892, when he was 92 years old.

The interview later was published as a full-page supplement to the Paris Morning Gazette on one of the anniversaries of Lincoln's birth.

Recollections of the young Lincoln, as remembered by Dennis Hanks and quoted verbatim by the interviewer, a Mattoon lawyer, follow as excerpts from the complete interview and opening with the first question "How old was Mr. Lincoln when you first met him?"

"About 24 hours, hardly that; I rekolect I ran all the way, over two miles, to see Nancy Hanks' boy baby. 'Twas common then for connexion to gather in them days to see new babies. I held the wee one a minnit. I was 10 years old, and it tickled me to hold the pulpy, red, little Lincoln."

"When did you move to Indiana?"

"When Abe was about 9. Mr. Lincoln moved first, and built a camp of brush in Spencer county. We came out a year later, and he then had a cabin up, and he gave us the shanty. On this spot, Abe grew to manhood."

"How far apart were your cabins?"

"About 15 rods. Abe killed a turkey the day we got there, an' couldn't get thro tellin' about it. The name was pronounced 'Linkhorn' by the folks then. We was all uneducated. After a spell we learned better."

"In the 'Life of Lincoln,' published

after his nomination it is stated you taught him to read."

"Yes sir, I did. I taught him to spell, read and cipher. He knew his letters pretty wellish; but no more. His mother taught him his letters. If ever there was a good woman on earth she was one; but she died soon after we arrived, and left him without a teacher; his father couldn't read a word."

"Is it possible he had no schooling?"

"Only about one quarter; scarcely that. I then set in to help him; I didn't know much, but I did the best I could."

"What books did he read first?"

"Webster's speller. When I got him through that, I only had a copy of Indiana statutes. Then he got hold of a book . . . (The Arabian Nights) . . . Abe would lay on the floor with a chair under his head and laugh over them Rabian Nights by the hour. I told him it was likely lies from end to end, but he learned to read right well in it."

"Had he any other books?"

"Yes, I borrowed for him the 'Life of Washington' and the 'Speeches of Henry Clay.' They had a powerful influence on him. He told me afterwards, in the White House, he wanted to live like Washington. His speeches show that; but the otherbook did the most amazing work."

"He was a Democrat, like his father and all of us, when he began to read it. When he closed it he was a Whig, heart and soul, and he went step by step 'till he became leader of the Republicans."

"Will you describe him when a boy?"

"Well, he was at this time not grown, only 6 feet 2 inches high. He was 6 feet 4½ when grown — tall, lathy and gangling—not much appearance, not handsome, not ugly, but peculiar. This kind of a feller: If a man rode up horseback, Abe would be the first one out, up on the fence asking questions, 'till his father would give him a knock side o' the head, then he's go and throw at snowbirds or suthin', but ponderin' all the while."

"Was he active and strong?"

"He was that. I was 10 years older, but I couldn't rassle him down. His legs was too long for me to throw him. He would fling one foot upon my shoulder and make me swing corners swift, and his arms so long and strong." My! how he could chop! His ax would flash and bite into a sugar tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him fallin' trees in a clearin' you would say there was three men at work by the way trees fell.

"But he never was sassy or quarrelsome. I've seen him walk into a crowd of sawln' rodies, and tell some drole yarn, and bust them all up. It was the same when he was a lawyer; all eyes, whenever he riz were on him; there was a suthin' peculiar-some about him."

"What did you teach him to write with?"

"Sometimes he would write with a piece of charcoal or the p'int of a burnt stick on the fence or floor. We got a little paper at the country town, and I made ink out of black-bury briar-root and a little copperas in it. I made his first pen out of a turkey buzzard feather, them's good for pens. We had no geese them days. After he learned to write he was scrawlin' his name everywhere."

"Did you have any idea of his future greatness?"

"No; it was a new country, and he was a raw boy; rather a bright an' likely lad, but the big world seemed far ahead of him. We were slow goin' folks, but he had it in him, though we never suspected it."

"Did he take to books eagerly?"

"No, we had to hire him at first, but when he got a taste, it was the old story—we had to pull the sow's ears to get her to the trough, and pull her tail to get her away."

"One more question: Did he get his rare sense and sterling principles from one parent or both?"

"Both; his strong will from his father. I'll tell you an incident: His father used to swear a little, and one day his baby girl picked up a foul oath, when Nancy called 'Thomas!' and said: 'Listen, husband'. He stoped that habit thar; never swore again. But Abe's kindness, humor, love of humanity, hatred of slavery, all came from her. I am free to say Abe was a mother's boy."

Paris Man Aids Lincoln's Growth

a new country, and he was a re-
futed, but the big world seemed far ahead of a



DENNIS F. HANKS

Dennis F. Hanks was born three miles southeast of Had-
sboro, Pa., 150 miles from Mead, 170 miles from the

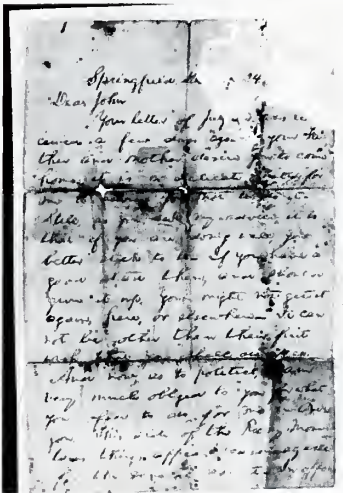
This photograph of Dennis F. Hanks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, accompanied a newspaper interview made with the Paris resident a few months before his death in 1892, and published on a Lincoln Day anniversary later by the former Paris Morning Gazette. Mr. Hanks lived for a number of years with his daughter, Nancy Hanks Shoaff, in the large white pillared frame home still standing at 418 West Madison street. Mr. Hanks died at the Shoaff residence from injuries received when run down by a runaway team of horses. As reported in Sept. 23, 1892 edition of the Paris Beacon, Mr. Hanks when injured was walking back to town from the fairgrounds, where he had attended an "Emancipation Day" celebration as an honored guest.

Son of
Dennis Hanks

**Lincoln's letter took a long, mysterious path to Tacoma |
Larry LaRue | The News Tribune**

By LARRY LARUE

thenewstribune.com



A copy of letter from Abraham Lincoln written to a nephew in Oregon in 1860, then photo-copied - literally - onto two glass negatives around World War I in Tacoma. Not seen since then, those negatives were re-discovered this year by the Tacoma Historical Society, which was going through dozens of donated boxes of negatives.

When 31-year-old John Talbot Hanks moved to Douglas County, Ore., from the East in 1859, his parents begged him to come home. So Hanks wrote a letter seeking advice from his uncle.

It took two months for that letter to reach Springfield, Ill.

A few days after it did, Hanks' uncle wrote a wise, compassionate response that calmed the nephew, who went on to live the last 55 years of his life in Oregon.

Abraham Lincoln's counsel had that kind of impact.

If mail in those days was torturously slow, the path a copy of that letter — signed, "Your Uncle, A. Lincoln" — followed to the Tacoma Historical Society was so filled with twists, it may never be completely unraveled.

No one is certain how the copy reached Tacoma in the first place, though there are theories. What is known is that it disappeared after it got here.

And went unaccounted for nearly 100 years.

Hanks died in 1915, but members of his large family migrated to Spanaway and Walla Walla, and it's almost certain one of them had Lincoln's original letter. They, in turn, wanted a copy of the deteriorating two-page correspondence.

"In those days, there were no Xerox machines. If they needed something copied, they'd have a photo taken of it," said Ron Karabaich, a longtime Tacoma photographer.

Karabaich figures into the recent history of the Lincoln letter, just as another photographer figured into its early history.

A Frenchman born in Paris, Paul Richards came to Tacoma in 1897 at age 25. Sometime around World War I, he opened Richards Studio, a photography business that lasted decades.

Soon after it opened, the studio photographed Lincoln's letter to Hanks and kept the two glass negatives.

Over the years, the studio donated millions of negatives to the Pierce County Library and various historical societies. But the Lincoln letter was never among those gifts.

What happened to it? Somehow, it wound up among dozens of boxes of aging negatives in the basement of a Prospect Hill home owned by the Richards family. In the 1990s, that house

was left to Ann Richards Stanton.

"She didn't live in it, but we got to know each other," Karabaich said. "She knew I was a photographer, and I always wondered what might be stashed away up in the attic there."

Turned out the stash was in the basement.

"In 1997, pipes burst and the basement was flooding and she called me and asked me to go over and rescue what I could," said Karabaich, who has run Old Town Photo for more than 30 years. "I went over there, and it was like walking into a time machine."

Boxes held negatives, on glass and nitrate film, depicting everything from World War I regiments to local baseball teams, from men with their automobiles to women with their children.

And all of it wet.

"It was a smelly old mess, and for years I had it in my front room, trying to organize it in some fashion," Karabaich said.

He went through box after box, sorting and storing in new boxes — and never saw that letter from Lincoln.

"I was looking at photos, not letters," he said.

Over the years, he talked to Stanton, who said she wanted the negatives to stay in Tacoma. She corresponded with the Tacoma Historical Society, seeking a tax deduction for donating them.

"I have a file a quarter-inch thick of correspondence," said society vice president Dale Wirsing. "It was a tangled tale."

Stanton died in 2010, and Karabaich delivered dozens of boxes to the historical society. The negatives stayed in those boxes, untouched, standing in hallways and small offices, for nearly three more years while the group made certain it had title to them.

Last May, board member Rusty Johnson began scanning the negatives into digital files. Another board member, Deb Freedman, started going through the CDs Johnson put together.

"I came across this letter and saw the signature at the bottom — A. Lincoln," Freedman said. "That was a cool moment."

The letter was legitimate; a copy of it printed in the fourth volume of "The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln."

What will the historical society do with the copy it has?

"We don't know," Freedman said, laughing. "We just found it!"

How much of a treasure is the letter? Consider the diplomacy — and yes, honesty — with

which Lincoln advises his nephew on whether to stay in Oregon or return to his family:

"If your Father and Mother desire you to come home, it is a delicate matter for me to advise you not to do it. Still, as you ask my advice, it is that if you are doing well, you better stick to it. If you have a good start there, and should give it up, you might not get it again, here, or elsewhere. It can not be other than their first wish that you shall do well."

And then, there is this: Hanks opposed the Oregon congressional campaign of David Logan, who once worked in Lincoln's law office. Rather than chastise his nephew, Lincoln wrote:

"You did what you thought was right; and when a man does what he thinks is right, he does the best he can."

Clearly, a letter worth having. And now, Tacoma does — and knows about it.

Larry LaRue: 253-597-8638 larry.larue@thenewstribune.com

SKETCHES OF LINCOLN.

Dennis Hanks' Visit to the White House.

BENT ON A STRANGE MISSION.

Recollections of John F. Speed—Lincoln's
Lack of Affectation and Vices—How He
Made Two People Happy—Plucking
Thistles and Planting Flowers.

[From "The Life of Lincoln" by William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik. Copyright, 1888, by Jesse W. Weik. Copyright, 1892, by D. Appleton & Co.]

XXII.

In 1863 Mr. Lincoln was informed one morning that among the visitors in the anteroom of the White House was a man who claimed to be his relative. He walked out and was surprised to find his boyhood friend and cousin, Dennis Hanks. The latter had come to see his distinguished relative on a rather strange mission. A number of persons living in Coles county, in Illinois, offended at the presence and conduct of a few soldiers who were at home from the war on furlough at the town of Charleston, had brought about a riot, in which encounter several of the latter had been killed. Several of the civilian participants who had acted as leaders in the strife had been arrested and sent to Fort McHenry or some other place of confinement equally far from their homes. The leading lawyers and politicians of central Illinois were appealed to, but they and all others who had tried their hand had been signally unsuccessful in their efforts to secure the release of the prisoners. Meanwhile some one of a sentimental turn had conceived the idea of sending garrulous old Dennis Hanks to Washington, fondly believing that his relationship to the president might in this last extremity be of some avail. The novelty of the project secured its adoption by the prisoners' friends, and Dennis, arrayed in a suit of new clothes, set out for the national capital. I have heard him describe this visit very minutely. How his appearance in Washington and his mission struck Mr. Lincoln can only be imagined.

The president, after listening to him and learning the purpose of his visit, retired to an adjoining room and re-



DENNIS HANKS.

turned with an extremely large roll of papers, labeled "The Charleston Riot Case," which he carefully untied and gravely directed his now diplomatic cousin to read. Subsequently, and as if to continue the joke, he sent him down to confer with the secretary of war. He soon returned from the latter's office with the report that the head of the war department could not be found, and it was well enough that he did not meet that abrupt and oftentimes demonstrative official. In the course of time, however, the latter happened in at the executive mansion, and there, in the presence of Dennis, the president sought to reopen the now noted Charleston case. Adopting Mr. Hanks' version, the secretary, with his characteristic plainness of speech, referring to the prisoners, declared that "every d—d one of them should be hung." Even the humane and kindly inquiry of the president, "If these men should return home and become good citizens, who would be hurt?" failed to convince the distinguished secretary that the public good could be promoted by so doing. The president not feeling willing to override the judgment of his war secretary in this instance, further consideration of the case ceased, and his cousin returned to his home in Illinois with his mission unaccomplished.

Dennis' Opinion of Stanton.

Dennis retained a rather unfavorable impression of Mr. Stanton, whom he described as a "frisky little Yankee with a short coattail." "I asked Abe," he said to me once, "why he didn't kick him out. I told him he was too fresh altogether." Lincoln's answer was, "If I did, Dennis, it would be difficult to find another man to fill his place." The president's cousin sat in the office during the endless interviews that take place between the head of the nation and the latter's loyal subjects. He saw modesty and obscurity mingling with the arrogance of pride and distinction. One day an attractive and handsomely dressed woman called to procure the release from prison of a relative in whom she professed the deepest interest. She was a good talker, and her winning ways seemed to be making a deep impression on the president. After listening to her story he wrote a few lines on a card, inclosing it in an envelope and directing her to take it to the secretary of war. Before sealing it he showed it to Dennis. It read, "This woman, dear Stanton, is a little smarter than she looks to be." She had, womanlike, evidently overstated her case.

Before night another woman called, more humble in appearance, more plainly clad. It was the old story—father and son both in the army, the former in prison. Could not the latter be discharged from the army and sent home to help his mother? A few strokes of

ludicrous features of many a lawsuit on the circuit. It was at this last interview in Springfield that he told me of the efforts that had been made by other lawyers to supplant me in the partnership with him. He insisted that such men were weak creatures, who, to use his own language, "hoped to secure a law practice by hanging to his coattail." I never saw him in a more cheerful mood. He gathered a bundle of books and papers he wished to take with him and started to go, but before leaving he made the strange request that the signboard which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway should remain. "Let it hang there undisturbed," he said, with a significant lowering of his voice. "Give our clients to understand that the election of a president makes no change in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon. If I live, I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing had ever happened." He lingered for a moment as if to take a last look at the old quarters and then passed through the door into the narrow hallway. I accompanied him down stairs. On the way he spoke of the unpleasant features surrounding the presidential office. "I am sick of officeholding already," he complained, "and I shudder when I think of the tasks that are still ahead."

He said the sorrow of parting from his old associations was deeper than most persons would imagine, but it was more marked in his case because of the feeling which had become irrepressible that he would never return alive. I argued against the thought, characterizing it as an illusory notion not in harmony or keeping with the popular ideal of a president. "But it is in keeping with my philosophy," was his quick retort. Our conversation was frequently broken in upon by the interruptions of passersby, who, each in succession, seemed desirous of claiming his attention. At length he broke away from them all. Grasping my hand warmly and with a fervent "Goodby," he disappeared down the street and never came back to the office again.

A Metamorphosis.

One who witnessed the impressive scene left the following graphic description of the inauguration and its principal incidents: "Near noon I found myself a member of the motley crowd gathered about the side entrance to Willard's hotel. Soon an open barouche drove up, and the only occupant stepped out. A large, heavy, awkward moving man, far advanced in years, short and thin gray hair, full face, plentifully seamed and wrinkled, head curiously inclined to the left shoulder, a low crowned, broad brimmed silk hat, an immense white cravat like a poultice, thrusting the old fashioned standing collar up to the ears, dressed in black throughout, with swallowtail coat not of the newest style. It was President Buchanan, calling to take his successor to the capitol. In a few minutes he reappeared, with Mr. Lincoln on his arm. The two took seats side by side, and the carriage rolled away, followed by a rather disorderly and certainly not very imposing procession. I had ample time to walk to the capitol and no difficulty in securing a place where everything could be seen and heard to the best advantage. The attendance at the inaugu-

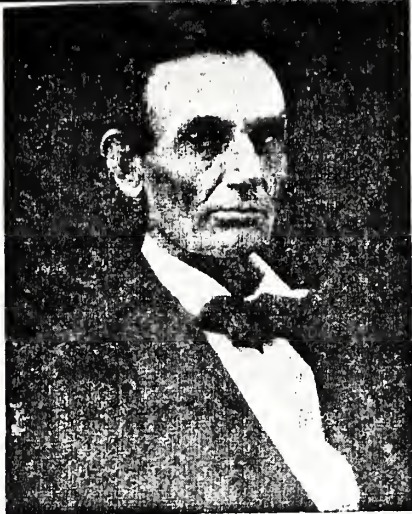
ration was, -they told me, unusually small, many being kept away by anticipated disturbance, as it had been rumored—truly, too—that General Scott himself was fearful of an outbreak and had made all possible military preparations to meet the emergency. A square platform had been built out from the steps to the eastern portico, with benches for distinguished spectators on three sides.

"Douglas, the only one I recognized, sat at the extreme end of the seat on the right of the narrow passage leading from the steps. There was no delay, and the gaunt form of the president elect was soon visible, slowly making his way to the front. To me at least he was completely metamorphosed, partly by his own fault and partly through the efforts of injudicious friends and ambitious tailors. He was raising—to gratify a very young lady, it is said—a crop of whiskers of the blacking brush variety, coarse, stiff and ungraceful, and in so doing spoiled, or at least seriously impaired, a face which, though never handsome, had in its original state a peculiar power and pathos. On the present occasion the whiskers were re-enforced by brand new clothes from top to toe, black dress coat, instead of the usual frock, black cloth or satin vest, black pantaloons and a glossy hat evidently just out of the box. To cap the climax of novelty, he carried a huge ebony cane with a gold head the size of an egg. In these, to him, strange habiliments he looked so miserably uncomfortable that I could not help pitying him.

Douglas Holds His Hat.

"Reaching the platform, his discomfort was visibly increased by not knowing what to do with hat and cane, and so he stood there, the target for 10,000 eyes, holding cane in one hand and hat in the other, the very picture of helpless embarrassment. After some hesitation he pushed the cane into a corner of the railing, but could not find a place for the hat except on the floor, where I could see he did not like to risk it. Douglas, who fully took in the situation, came to the rescue of his old friend and rival and held the precious hat until the owner needed it again, a service which, if predicted two years before, would probably have astonished him.

"The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Taney, whose black robes, attenuated figure and cadaverous countenance reminded me of a galvanized corpse. Then the president came forward and read his inaugural address in a clear and distinct voice. It was attentively listened to by all, but the closest listener was Douglas, who leaned forward as if to catch every word, nodding his head emphatically at those passages which most pleased him. There was some applause, not very much nor very enthusiastic."

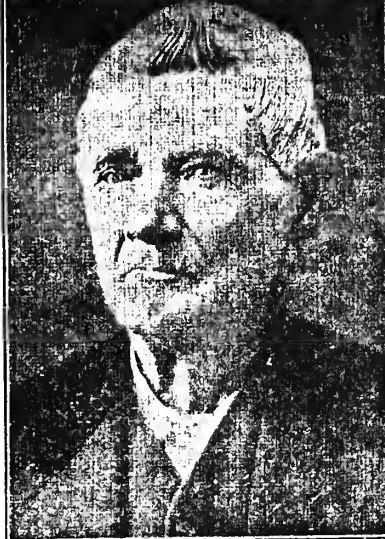


VISIT TO KENTUCKY

Not long since, the senior editor of the Shelby County Leader in company with his three brothers, had the pleasure of an automobile trip to Kentucky by way of Vincennes, Indiana. Thence through the picturesque hills, mostly by cement and gravel roads to West Baden Springs where we rested a short time quenching our thirst from the celebrated springs known by tourists for its "healing" qualities and "fragrant" odor. From there we went to Jeffersonville, Indiana; visited Mrs. Charles Booth, our sister, for a time before journeying to Hodgenville, Kentucky, where Abraham Lincoln and his cousin, Dennis F. Hanks were born. On the public square of this beautifully situated town of 15,00 inhabitants, is located the Lincoln Memorial Statue, erected from appropriations of \$2,500.00 by the State of Kentucky, \$10,000.00 by the Congress of the United States, supplemented by private subscriptions to the amount of several thousand dollars. It was unveiled May 31, 1909, on which occasion the principal address was made by Henry Watterson.

LINCOLN LOG CABIN

Two and one-half miles south of Hodgenville, on the Jackson Highway, is the shrine, sheltering the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born. Property of the United States and open to visitors every day of the year. The Lincoln Farm, on which the Memorial Building stands, consists of 110 acres, and is part of a tract of 300 acres which was owned by Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, from December 18.8 until 1816. It was conveyed to the Lincoln Memorial Association in 1907. The building was erected at a cost of about a quarter of a million dollars. The corner stone was laid by President Roosevelt on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1909, and the building was dedicated by President Taft on Nov. 9, 1911. The property was turned over to the United States in the year 1916, together with an endowment fund of about \$50,000.00 for its upkeep, and was received by the Secretary of



War, with an address by President Woodrow Wilson, on Sept. 4, 1916.

We are under obligation to Mr. C. M. Mather, of Hodgenville for the above information, and the kindness shown us while entertained at his home. Mr. Mather is not only interested in Lincolnia, but stands high in the practice of law. Not long since he delivered a Memorial Address at the tomb of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, mother of Abraham Lincoln, near Lincoln City, Spencer county, Indiana.

LIFE OF LINCOLN

As a seeker for new facts pertaining to Lincoln's life, the late Dr. William E. Barton was indefatigable, says Lewis A. Warren, Director Lincoln Historical Research Foundation. "No trip was too long, no trouble too great if it seemed likely to result in new information. His books, and particularly his brochures, are evidence of this propensity. In the years which have elapsed since the publication of the Nickolay and Hay and Tarbell biographies, no one has approached Doctor Barton in the discovery of hitherto unknown material on Lincoln's life. * * It is not likely that anything of importance will ever be added to his researches on Lincoln's paternity and religion. Biographers will continue to reinterpret Lincoln's life, but their work will be permanently lightened in those fields to which Doctor."

DENNIS F. HANKS LETTER

A short time before Doctor Barton's death from pneumonia he visited friends in Shelbyville, and during his visit, presented the Shoaff family with a phototype letter, written by our grandfather, Dennis F. Hanks, to an inquiring friend, dated April 22, 1866, one year after Lincoln's death. We give it in words as he wrote it. Dennis Hanks was the soul of honor. He was not illiterate as quoted by some persons who knew him least. He was truthful in every word and deed. Only loquacious when interviewed. A reader and student of the bible. This, as I knew him when he lived with his daughter, Mrs. James Shoaff, Paris, Illinois, where he died at the age of 93 years.

DENNIS F. HANKS' LETTER COPIED IN TYPE

April the 22nd 1866.

Dennis F. Hanks was Born in Hardin County on the tributary Branch of the South Fork of Nolin on the old Richard Creal farm in the old peach orchard in a log cabin 3 miles from Hodgenville. thence we moved to Mercer County and staid there about 3 years and moved back again to the same place and there remained until we moved to Spencer County Indiana. This was I think in the year 1816 if my memory serves we rite. My mother and Abes Mothers Mother war sisters. My Mothers name was Nancy Hanks. Abes Grand Mother was Lucy Hanks which was Mothers sister. The woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparow the sister of Lucy and Nancy. The other Sister her name was Polly Friend. So you see that there was 4 sisters that was Hankses.

I have no letter from my friends yet. I dont no the reason. Billy did you write to William Hall in Missouri, Frankford. I think he could tell you something that would be rite. He is my half brother try him.

William I have seen a book which states that Lincolns war quakers. I say this is a mistake they war Baptist. All this talk about their Religous talk is a humbug. They try to make them out Puritans. This is not the case.

You asked me what sort of songs or interest Abe took part in. I will say this, anything that was lively. He never would sing any religious songs. It apered to me that it did not suit him. But for a man to preach a sermon he would lisen to with great attention.

Did you find out from Richard Creal if He lived on the place A. Lincoln was Born or not. I am going there in May to visit my birth place the 15th of May, this is my Birth Day 1799. It has been 48 years sence.

D. F. HANKS

My first school master was by the name of. Warden, taught school at the old Baptist Church on Nolin near Brunk's farm at the Big Spring down in a deep hollow close to the house.

“ABE” LINCOLN AND “DENNIS” HANKS

Editor Herald:

The current number of the American magazine contains an article by Eleanor Atkinson, concerning an interview with Dennis Hanks, who was then a resident of Charleston.

The author describes Dennis, or “Denny” as he was known throughout Coles county, as ninety years old at that time.

“A withered figure of an ancient man,” Mrs. Atkinson pictures Hanks, “tilted back in a splint bottomed chair asleep in the light of the pale winter sunshine that streamed through a western window in a pleasant low-ceiling sitting room, with a bright red carpet and a coal fire.”

The interview which followed is given in “Denny’s” own language, homely, hones and smacking of the soil with which he bore so intimate an acquaintance during his long and wholesome life. In speaking of the first view of Coles county after a long and tiresome migration up the Wabash and across prairie, Dennis says: “It was purty kentry up on the Sagamon, and we all tuk up with the idee that they could run steamboats up to our cornfields an’ load; but we had fever an’ ager turrible, so in a year or two we moved back here to Coles county, and we’ve been here ever since.”

In telling of the assassination of Lincoln, Dennis says:

“The next spring after I went to Washington, Abe was shot. I heerd of it this a way. I was settin’ in my shop, peggin’ away at a shoe when a man come in an’ said, ‘Denis, Honest Abe is dead.’ ‘Dead, Dead. Old Abe dead!’ I kept sayin’ to myself. ‘My God, it aint so. I went out to see Aunt Sairy where she lived all alone after Tom died an’ said, ‘Aunt Sairy, Abe’s dead.’ ‘Yes, I know,’ sez she. ‘I’ve been a waitin’ fur it. I knowed they’d kill him.’ An’ she never asked any questions. A body’d thought that the ‘arth stopped whirlin’ for a few days, the way everybody went on. It was like, even here in Charleston, a black cloud that kivered the sun.”

It is impossible in this brief space to do the article justice. In the American it occupies several pages, and is illustrated by views of Dennis, whom all the older residents of Coles county remember. “Sairy” Lincoln, who lived in Paradise township until her death, Abe and Abe’s old haunts which he frequented as a boy.—Eleanor Atkinson in American Magazine.

There has been much written about Mr. Lincoln, and those connected with him, by marriage, and otherwise, by people who have no personal knowledge of the subject of which they write, and depend upon their knowledge, upon what they gather from public idle gossip. Now, I knew Mr. Lincoln and “Dennis” Hanks for over 50 years before the tragic death befel them both. Mr. Lincoln was a regular attendant upon the circuit court at Charleston for many years, and was a well known character on the streets of Charleston, almost up to the time of his election to the presidency, and was personally known to most of the people of Coles county. His father, Thomas Lincoln, for many years lived ten miles south of Charleston, at Farmington, in Pleasant Grove township, and is buried at Shiloh cemetery, near Farmington. I attended the great debate, at Charleston, in 1858, between Douglas and Lincoln, which gave Mr. Lincoln a world wide reputation, as a “coming

man,” in national politics, and his courage in meeting Senator Douglas was discouraged by most of his political friends, who were doubtful as to the result of the debate, as Douglas was acknowledged to be one of the most able statesmen of his time, as well as one of the strongest debaters in the country.

While I am a Democrat and was a strong partisan of Senator Douglas, I must say that Mr. Lincoln acquitted himself nobly in his contest with the “Little Giant,” much to the admiration and surprise of his political friends, as well as many personal admirers, as we were all his personal friends, for no man who knew Mr. Lincoln could help loving him for his many fine traits of character and his absolute personal honesty and integrity.

Now, as to Dennis Hanks. He was a resident of Charleston when I went there in 1838. “Uncle” Dennis was the village shoemaker and has made many pairs of shoes during my long acquaintance with him, and I most intimately knew him from 1838 to the time of his tragic death which occurred at Paris, Ills., where he was living with his daughter, Mrs. James Shoaff, of that place. The negroes of Paris were holding an emancipation celebration and borrowed “Uncle Dennis” to sit on the platform at the speaking, and the old man was very feeble and almost blind. He, at the conclusion of the speaking got down from the stand and in attempting to make his way home was run over by a carriage. From the effects of the “jar” he died in a few days.

I do not think Mrs. Adkinson ever had her alleged interview with “Uncle Dennis,” as he was a man of strong common sense, and while he had only a common school education he always used good language in expressing himself, and he never used such “gibberish” talk as Mrs. Adkinson attributes to him. “Uncle Dennis” was a man of great native dignity of deportment and no one ever addressed him as “Denny.” Everyone at Charleston always respected him as a man of high principle and as an honest man, and while he was a poor man, so far as this world’s goods are concerned, he was a man who commanded the respect of his townsmen and neighbors. He was always a Democrat in politics, and was always open to a political argument or a discussion of the true mode of baptism, as taught by the bible. He was a life-long member of the Christian church.

His oldest son, John, was a member of my “mess” in 1850, when I made my first trip to California across the plains, and it still living in Oregon. He has two daughters living, Mrs. Shoaff, of Paris, Ills., and Mrs. A. H. Chapman, of Charleston, Ills., the mother of “Bob” Chapman, the postmaster of Charleston, who has the distinction of being the best “P. M.” that Charleston ever had, and has the further distinction of having in connection with myself, while editor of the Charleston Courier, of materially assisting in defeating “Uncle” Joe Cannon for congress, the first and only time he was ever defeated for public office. “Uncle Dennis” also has several grandchildren at Charleston, the Dowlings. One of his grand-daughters with her daughter, Mrs. Meisser, spent a winter here some four years ago.

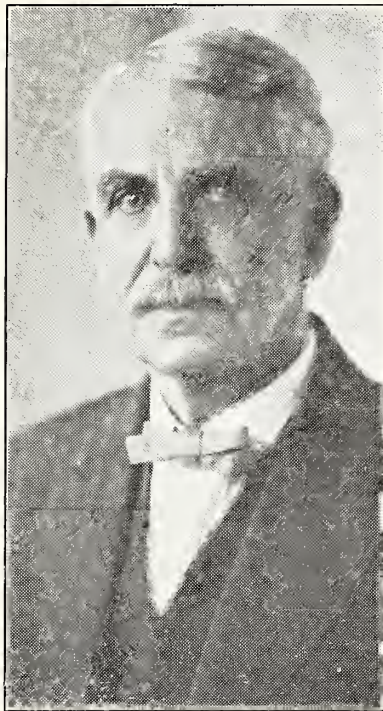
Mrs. Adkinson’s “interview” with “Uncle Dennis” Hanks reads to me like a “fake” which it is so far as giving a true history of Mr. Hanks’ life.

GEO. E. MASON.

**LINCOLN SAVED UNION;
HANKS SAVED LINCOLN.**

Douglas Shoaf of the Paris Gazette, a grandson of Dennis Hanks, tells the story of Lincoln's rescue from a watery grave. "I read one time where some man told a story of rescuing Abraham Lincoln," says Mr. Shoaf "when he fell into a creek in Spencer county, Ind. I forget who it was that claimed to have saved Lincoln. Now as a matter of fact up to the time that he went to Mason county, Illinois, to live, Lincoln had only had one experience of that kind, and then he was saved by my grandfather, Dennis Hanks, who on more than one occasion has related the incident to me. Grandfather was still living when I read the story in which some other man claimed he was the one who had taken Lincoln from the water, and grandfather told me that so far as he knew, the claim of the other man was not true.

"You know that grandfather and Lincoln were together constantly when Lincoln was a boy. Grandfather told me that Lincoln in his bare feet tried to cross a creek, walking on a wet and slippery log. His feet slipped from under him and he went down and out of sight in the water. Grandfather got hold of him and pulled him out. Grandfather told me that story many times. A short time before his death when he had read much about Lincoln he said 'They say that Lincoln saved the union, don't they? Well, I saved Lincoln. I believe that God put me there to do that.'"



T. B. SHOAFF.

STATEMENT BY THOS. B. SHOAFF

Concerning the Thirteen Persons in the Lincoln Migration from Indiana to Illinois in the Spring of 1830

I. THOMAS LINCOLN, WIFE AND CHILDREN.

Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush (Johnston) Lincoln his wife, together with Abraham Lincoln, son of Thomas, and John D. Johnston, son of Sarah, making a family of 4 persons.

II. THE SQUIRE HALL FAMILY.

Squire Hall, (son of Levi and Nancy Hall) and Matilda Johnston Hall his wife, daughter of Daniel and Sarah Johnston, and their son John Johnston Hall. Mrs. Johnston, subsequently the wife of Thomas Lincoln, step-mother of Abraham Lincoln, and mother-in-law of Dennis F. Hanks, grandfather of Shoaff Bros. The step-mother of Abraham Lincoln, also the great-grand-mother of the Shoaff Bros.—3 persons.

III. THE DENNIS F. HANKS FAMILY.

Shoaff Brother's grandparents, Dennis F. Hanks and Elizabeth Johnston Hanks and their four children: Sarah Jane Hanks, later Mrs. Thos. Dowling; Nancy Hanks, later Mrs. James Shoaff, mother of the Shoaff Brothers; Harriet Hanks, later wife of Col. Gus Chapman; and John Talbot Hanks.—6 persons.

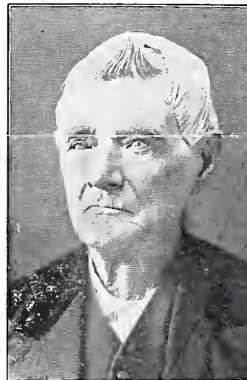
Four Printers From a Printer's Family.

Thomas B. Shoaff, of Shelbyville, Ill.; L. A. G. Shoaff and Fred L. Shoaff, of Paris, Ill., and J. Douglas Shoaff, of Mattoon, Ill., grandsons of Dennis F. Hanks, cousin of Abraham Lincoln, and great-grandsons of Sarah Bush-Johnston, step-mother of Lincoln.

Thos. B. Shoaff, 85, the eldest of the brothers, is dean of Illinois newspaper publishers, and perhaps the oldest printer in the United States continuously in service—70 years a printer and 64 years newspaper publisher. The youngest of the brothers, J. Douglas, 71 in August, 1932.

DENNIS F. HANKS' LETTER

A short time before Doctor Barton's death from pneumonia he visited friends in Shelbyville, and during his visit, presented the Shoaff family with a phototype letter, written by our grandfather, Dennis F. Hanks, to an inquiring friend, dated April 22, 1866, one year after Lincoln's death. We give it in words as he wrote it. Dennis Hanks was the soul of honor. He was not illiterate as quoted by some persons who knew him least. He was truthful in every word and deed. Only loquacious when interviewed. A reader and student of the Bible. This, as I knew him when he lived with his daughter, Mrs. James Shoaff, Paris, Illinois, where he died at the age of 93 years.



DENNIS F. HANKS

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April the 22nd 1866.

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I have no letter from my friepds yet. I dont no the reason. Billy did you write to William Hall in Missouri, Frankford. I think he could tell you something that would be rite. He is my half brother try him.

William I have seen a book which states that Lincolns war quakers. I say this is a mistake they war Baptist. All this talk about their Religous talk is a humbug. They try to make them out Puritans. This is not the case.

You asked me what sort of songs or interest Abe took part in. I will say this, anything that was lively. He never would sing any religious songs. It apared to me that it did not suit him. But for a man to preach o sermon he would lisen to with great attention.

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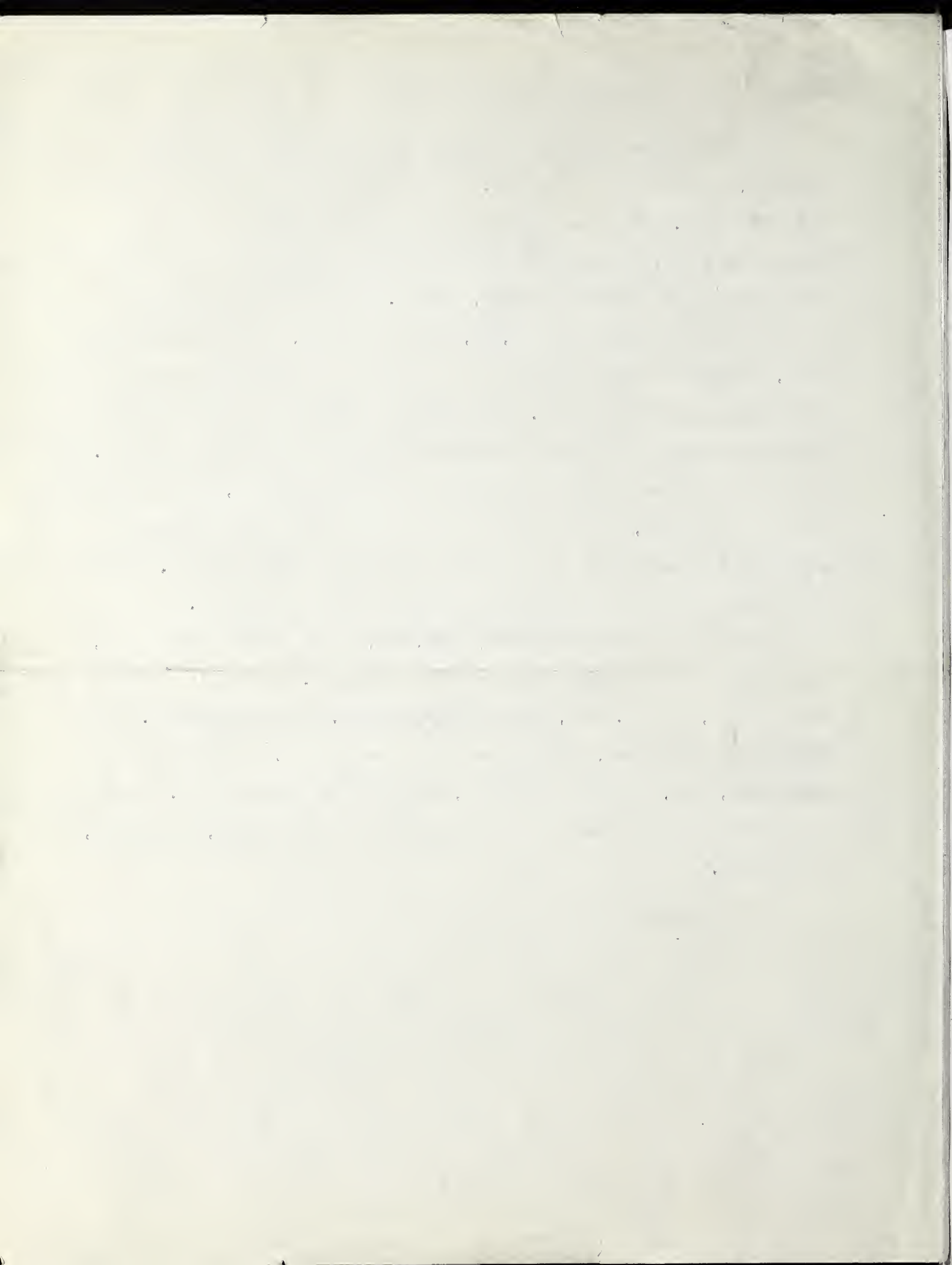
D. F. HANKS

My first school master was by the name of Wardep, taught school at the old Baptist Church on Nolin near Brunk's farm at the Big Spring down in a deep hollow close to the house.

THE HERNDON MANUSCRIPTS

The very generous use of the Herndon manuscripts by the late Senator Beveridge, in his recent publication, has raised again the question of their historical value. The storm which was caused by the discussion of these documents by Lamon, was much more severe than the remonstrance against their release in a later edition by Herndon, himself. When Weik the present owner of the famous collection published his, "The Real Lincoln," a few murmurings were heard, but little adverse criticism was voiced due to a more conservative interpretation of the documents. It might be said that there has been a more favorable reaction towards these manuscripts with each recurring presentation. If there has been any general disapproval among Lincoln students, of the present effort by Beveridge, it can be traced to his use of the Herndon manuscripts used as source material for the first two chapters of the first volume, covering the parentage of Lincoln and the first twenty one years of his life.

In the preface of his ~~Beveridge~~ ~~Lincoln~~ ~~is~~ ~~an~~ ~~acknowledgement~~ ~~that~~, "The largest and most important aid was derived from Mr. Beveridge's friend of long standing, Jesse W. Weik, ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Indiana~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Herndon~~ ~~papers~~." Lamon ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~statement~~ ~~that~~, "Of all the contributors to Mr. Herndon's store of ~~information~~ ~~good~~ ~~bad~~ ~~and~~ ~~indifferent~~ ~~concerning~~ ~~this~~ ~~period~~ ~~of~~ ~~Mr.~~ ~~Lincoln's~~ ~~life~~ ~~first~~ ~~twenty-one~~ ~~years~~ Dennis (Hanks) is the most amusing, insinuating, and prolific."



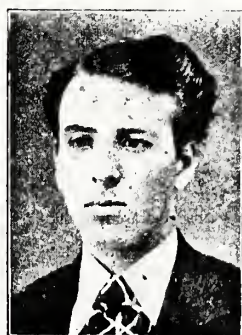
Veteran Publisher and Wife Wed 60 Years



60TH ANNIVERSARY



50TH ANNIVERSARY



It is the privilege of few married couples to enjoy sixty years of happiness together, but this has been accorded to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Benton Shoaff of Shelbyville. On Sunday, November 15, they will quietly celebrate this event.

St. Paul's Episcopal church, in which Thomas B. Shoaff and Miss Ella W. Lytle were married sixty years ago, still stands among the stately pines at Brainerd, Minn. The Northern Pacific Railroad company was then extending its lines and had its headquarters at the pioneer village of Brainerd. The chapel in which the ceremony took place was built by the officials of the road. It had barely been completed at the time of the wedding. The floors were still littered with shavings and sawdust, but this was no barrier. The day before the wedding Mr. Shoaff thoroughly cleaned the church floor and dusted the seats. With the installation of the headlight from a locomotive everything was in readiness for the service.

Birch Bark Invitations.

Invitations were written on bark stripped from the beautiful birch trees. The bride-to-be attended to this part of the arrangements. On the strips of birch bark was printed "A Rustic Wedding," followed by the words of the invitation. Practically the entire population of the village was invited to the wedding ceremony which took place in the evening. The vows were received by Rev. Mr. Patterson of St. Paul, Minn.

Mr. and Mrs. Shoaff visited Brainerd ten years ago to observe their fiftieth wedding anniversary. After the service in the church, the Chamber of Commerce of that city tendered a banquet to them. There were 115 invited guests present.

Mr. and Mrs. Shoaff came to Shelbyville from Danville in 1900. They have four children, James Shoaff, associated with his father in publishing the Shelby County Leader; Miss Clare Shoaff, who is still at home and also does her part on the paper; Miss Lavonne Shoaff, also at home and for a number of years has served as health supervisor of the Shelbyville public schools, and Douglas L. Shoaff, who also assists in publishing the Leader. James and Douglas are married and have homes of their own.

Printer's Devil at Fourteen.

When 14 years of age, Mr. Shoaff entered the "College of Hard Knocks," with mallet and shooting-stick as his text-books. He served his apprenticeship as printer's devil, and having learned to manipulate the "Wash" hand-press successfully, his father increased his pay from \$4.00 per week to \$10.00. Since the year 1860 he has been continuously in the printing and publishing business. In the year 1861, he, with his father, published "The Bement (Ill.) Union," but after a short time his father enlisted in Company A, 35th Ill. Vol. where he thereafter served as 2nd Lieutenant with Col. G. A. Smith of Decatur. In the year 1864, when 17 years of age, T. B. Shoaff published his first newspaper "The Boy About Town," editing the same from his father's office in Decatur, Illinois.

On February 23rd, 1873, Mr. Shoaff and his father established the Paris (Illinois) Gazette. His two brothers, Fred L., and J. D. Shoaff later became the owners of this paper and continued as its publishers until recently when they sold the Gazette to parties who discontinued the paper and now Edgar county is without a Democratic newspaper.

Establishes Danville Leader.

In 1880 T. B. Shoaff established the Danville (Ill.) Leader, and later was associated with the Danville Daily Press and still later with the Danville Daily Democrat. In the early winter of 1900 he purchased his present paper, The Shelby County Leader, first published in 1840 by W. W. Bishop, under the name of "The Okaw." The father of T. B. Shoaff began his printing career as a type-setter on "The Okaw," with Joe Duncan, and these two men during that period of time published a monthly magazine called "The Prairie Flower," a copy of which is to be found on file in the Illinois Historical Library at Springfield.

Here is an incident that rarely occurs in life. The father, James Shoaff, set type on the "Okaw," now the Shelby County Leader, in the year 1840, when 21 years of age. In the month of January, 1900, just 60 years thereafter, his son, T. B. Shoaff came to Shelbyville and is finishing his life on the same newspaper.

SHOAFF IN EVIDENCE

The Democratic convention at Springfield last Wednesday was attended by a large and enthusiastic bunch of Democrats from Shelby county.

Charles W. Bliss, of Hillsboro, Joe Page, of Jerseyville, and T. B. Shoaff, of Shelbyville, were present as delegates. Mr. Bliss and Mr. Page were seated on the platform, and Chairman Bruce Campbell, observed Mr. Shoaff seated amongst the delegates near by, motioned for Mr. Shoaff to come forward to the platform, and the three men stood up together. "We have with us today, said the chairman, three old time Democrats who have been editing newspapers in Illinois 50 years." T. B. Shoaff quickly stepping forward, said, "Did I understand you to say 50 years?" "Yes." "Then add 20 years more to that statement," and the correction was made.

[ERRATA—What we should of said to be absolutely correct, 64 years editor and publisher and 69 a printer.]

The chairman added further that Thomas Benton Shoaff was the grandson of Dennis F. Hanks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln. Cheering at the sound of Lincoln's name came from the delegates.

EDITOR, A FRIEND OF LINCOLN, IS KILLED BY AUTO

Pana, Ill., Oct. 20.—[Special.]—Thomas B. Shoaff, 85, second oldest editor and publisher in Illinois, owner of the Shelby County Leader of Shelbyville, was struck by an automobile driven by A. L. Henry of Westervelt tonight while crossing a street at Shelbyville. His skull was fractured and he died at Shelby County Memorial hospital.

Shoaff was for fifty years prominent in Democratic politics and widely known throughout Illinois. One year ago he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding. Shoaff was acquainted with Abraham Lincoln. He is survived by his widow, two sons, James Shoaff and Douglas Shoaff, and one daughter.



JOHN HANKS

The steadiest and most trustworthy
of his family.



**Dennis Hanks, Lincoln's cousin
and playmate.**

LINCOLN'S TWO COUSINS WHO SWAYED HIS LIFE

Dennis Hanks and John Hanks Were Both Companions of His Boyhood—It Was With John That He Made The Famous Voyage Down the Mississippi

By WILLIAM E. BARTON.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was born in a Kentucky cabin at dawn on a Sunday morning. The reception committee of neighbor women and female relatives who had tarried through the night assisting the granny-woman was probably augmented by a few other women who lived within easy riding distance and who called during the day. We are not sure whether Brother Dodge was preaching that day at Nolin Fork Church; if he was, the women stopped on their way to or from service. But one early caller has left us his own story.

When Tom Lincoln rode over that morning and said there was a boy baby at his house, Dennis Hanks ran the whole two miles to see the new arrival. His foster-mother and Nancy's, their Aunt Betsy Sparrow, was in charge. She had washed the baby and put on a linsey shirt and "a yaller flannen petticoat," and stewed some dried berries for Nancy. She laid the baby in the arms of Dennis, then not quite 10. "Be careful of him, Dennis," said Nancy, "for you are the first boy he has ever seen."

The Pronouncement of Dennis.

The baby began to howl. He was, as Dennis said, "the cryingest baby" he had ever seen; he had not then seen many. The baby's face was red, "like cherry-pulp, squeezed dry in wrinkles." He handed the baby back to Betsy Sparrow. "Take him," he said, "he'll never amount to much."

This, the first boy whom the new baby had ever seen, was destined to be the boy whom Lincoln should thereafter see oftener and more intimately than any other during the period of his own boyhood. And when Lincoln died, Dennis Hanks was the only person then living who had seen the President before he was twenty-four hours old.

Forty miles away, and in the same county then, though not now, lived another boy who two days before the birth of Abraham Lincoln had celebrated his own seventh birthday. He probably knew nothing about the birth of Abraham until several days later. But he, too, was destined to know Abraham Lincoln intimately, to split rails with him, to navigate the Great Father of Waters with him, to change his own politics for Lincoln's sake, and finally to survive him and add his fund of reminiscence to the world's knowledge of Lincoln. His name was John Hanks.

These two cousins of Abraham Lincoln have a very important place in his life story, but it is not very clearly defined. A number of distinguished biographers have mixed them badly. Even Senator Beveridge, whose book suffers not alone from its lamented sudden ending, but from lack of a revision and correction which his editors have not given it, helps in several particulars to complicate the problem.

Relation of John and Dennis.

Beveridge says that John and Dennis Hanks were half-brothers (Vol. I, p. 59); that during John Hanks's four years in Indiana he lived in the Lincoln home (1, 59); and that when the Lincoln family went to Illinois John Hanks was in the wagon, having probably joined it on the way (1, 103).

In these and other particulars Beveridge is wholly wrong. John and Dennis Hanks were first cousins. During the four years that John Hanks was in Indiana he was frequently in the Lincoln cabin, but mostly worked around for other farmers who could afford to pay him, and he made at least two trips down the Mississippi River, gaining the experience and skill which helped him to make Lincoln a boatman. As for his being in the wagon, the John Hanks who was there was John Talbot Hanks, the infant son of Dennis.

I should like first to place these two men securely in their proper position in the family of which Lincoln was a member (a thing which I had hoped to do in my Life of Lincoln but had to omit with other matter because of the length of the work) and then to tell perhaps a little more clearly than has yet been told just how these two men came into their share in Lincoln's life and what kind of men they were. Let me first give as briefly as I may their place on the Lincoln family tree.

Early Hankses in Virginia.

Their grandfather, Joseph Hanks, was born in Richmond County, Va., Dec. 20, 1725. He was a son of John and Catharine Hanks. His father died when Joseph was a lad, but his mother lived till 1779. Joseph married Ann Lee. In 1782 the family removed to what is now West Virginia and in the Spring of 1784 to Kentucky. There Joseph died in 1783, and his widow, Ann Lee Hanks, returned to Virginia and died there. Joseph and Ann Hanks had nine children, five sons and four daughters,

of whom one son and three daughters have a place in this short sketch. The eldest son, Thomas, who had served for two short periods in the Revolution, remained in Virginia; the next son was William Hanks, who married Elizabeth Hall. John Hanks was the son of William and Elizabeth and was born in Nelson County, four miles from Bardstown, the famous "old Kentucky home" of song and story, Feb. 10, 1802.

The eldest daughter of Joseph and Ann Lee Hanks was Lucy, a bright, capable and attractive girl, who was born not earlier than 1765 and who, at the age of 17, became the mother of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. She later became the wife of a Revolutionary soldier, Henry Sparrow, bore him eight children, lived an exemplary life, and was noted for her piety, her intelligence, her ability to read and write and for her strong and gracious personality. The misstep of her youth was completely forgotten in the neighborhood where she lived and died.

The youngest daughter of Joseph and Ann Hanks was Nancy—not to be confused with the Nancy Hanks, the daughter of Lucy, who was Lincoln's mother. This Nancy Hanks, like Lucy Hanks, her eldest sister, became the mother of an illegitimate child—Dennis F. Hanks, born on May 15, 1799, and taking his middle initial from the name of his father, Charles Friend, the brother-in-law of Nancy's sister, Polly, Polly being married to Jesse Friend.

So much for the family tree. Abraham Lincoln in his autobiographical sketch of 1860 said that John Hanks was first cousin to Abraham's mother. John Hanks said Abraham's grandmother, Lucy, was sister to John's father, William. He also said he and Dennis were first cousins. Dennis said, "My mother was Nancy Hanks, who was Abe's mother's mother's sister." He also said, "The woman that raised me, her name was Elizabeth Sparrow, wife of Thomas Sparrow." And: "Abe's mother's mother was Lucy Hanks, sister of Polly, wife of Jesse Friend and sister of Lucy and Nancy; there was four Hankses that was sisters."

Whoever attempts to break that connection (and diligent effort has been made to break it), will have to impugn the veracity of all the Hanks tribe prior to 1899 and of Abraham Lincoln besides.

Brought Up by the Sparrows.

Dennis Hanks and his cousin Nancy, children of sisters, were brought up by Thomas and Betsy Sparrow, who had no children of their own. Thomas was a brother of Henry, and Betsy a sister of Lucy, Polly and Nancy. So close was the relationship thus established between the Sparrows and their foster-children that Nicolay and Hay say truly that Nancy was brought up with the Sparrows, was called by their name, and called them by names appropriate in the relationship of parents and daughter.

Thomas and Betsy Sparrow had lived in Mercer County from the time of their marriage in 1796 until 1801. In that year they moved to Nolin Creek in Hardin County and remained till 1803, Nancy and Dennis being with them. From 1803 till the end of 1805 they were in Mercer County again, and then moved back to the same house they had occupied in the "Plum Orchard," a grove of wild crab-apples—the same house in which Dennis had been born.

To the Sparrow home in the "Plum Orchard" came young Joe Hanks some time in 1805. He, the youngest son of Joseph, had gone back to Virginia with his widowed mother in 1794. He is presumed to have remained with her till she died, for she does not appear afterward. She probably found a home among her own people, the Lees, and spent her last days there. Joe had become a carpenter, and after his return to Kentucky he had a job in Elizabethtown, where he was associated with a husky young fellow, Tom Lincoln. Tom came with Joe to the Sparrow home, and the courtship began that resulted in the marriage of Tom Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. Nancy by this time was a skilled seamstress, and had acquaintance in Mercer County, where she was sometimes employed.

Marriage of Tom and Nancy.

Polly Ewing, a Mercer County girl, had married Dick Berry of Washington County. Nancy was in the Berry home in June, 1806, when Tom Lincoln rode over and asked Dick Berry to ride with him to Springfield, the county seat, and obtain a marriage license. Tom Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married in the Berry home June 12, 1806. But they went immediately to Elizabethtown, in Hardin County, and spent part of their honeymoon in the Sparrow cabin. To that very cabin they returned in the Spring of 1808, and they were living there when, amid the apple blossoms of the Spring of 1808, the unborn life of Abraham Lincoln began.

Though Thomas and Betsy Sparrow could not read, they had given to their two wards educational advantages much superior to their own. Nancy Hanks Lincoln did not sign her name to the one document in which her name is on record; but if, as Beveridge says, she was wholly illiterate, it is difficult to understand how she could have impressed her relations as she did—as a woman of education.

Beveridge appears to have overlooked the statement in Scripps's campaign sketch, for which Lincoln furnished the preliminary sketch and of which he read the proofs, and which has the practical value of an autobiography. In that Scripps says that Lincoln's mother did not learn to write, but was a ready reader, often reading the Bible to her children. It would have been strange if it had been otherwise.

Her mother, Lucy, could write, and Dennis wrote well. Dennis Hanks was a remarkably good penman, though his spelling and grammar were erratic. His statements made

in writing were always clear and consistent. His first school was in Kentucky and was eleven or twelve miles from where Abraham went to school.

The school that Dennis attended was kept by a man named Warden, in the old Nolin Baptist Church, a log house. Dennis became a man of such education that he did a large part of the letter-writing for the neighborhood. His story that he taught Abraham Lincoln his alphabet and aided in his later education is wholly probable. The two families were eleven miles apart, but their visits back and forth were frequent. Dennis's foster mother, Elizabeth Sparrow, loved Nancy Hanks Lincoln as her own daughter.

In 1816 the Lincolns moved to Indiana and a few months later the Sparrows followed them. The Sparrow family made their home in "the darn half-faced camp" in the Lincoln door-yard. The sickness that carried off the mother of Lincoln claimed both the Sparrows and, singularly, also the real mother of Dennis Hanks together with her husband. The five graves of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Thomas and Betsy Sparrow and Levi and Nancy are "all in one mound," as Dennis said.

Dennis in the Lincoln Home.

After the death of the Sparrows, Dennis Hanks lived in the Lincoln home. Between 1817 and June 9, 1821, when Dennis was married to Elizabeth, older daughter of Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, he and Abraham Lincoln had the same sleeping quarters in the cabin loft. Dennis and Elizabeth lived with the Lincolns first in Indiana and then in Illinois until Lincoln left home and for years after. So also did Squire Hall, husband of Matilda, the younger daughter of Mrs. Lincoln, after his marriage to her on Sept. 13, 1826.

Here, by the way, Beveridge again goes wrong. He has confused Squire Hall with Squire Hall's father. Since the days of Daniel Boone and his brother Squire, the name Squire had been a rather common Christian name in Kentucky. Squire Hall was the son of Levi Hall and of his wife, Nancy Hanks. Beveridge thought his real name to have been Levi, and "Squire" to have been a nickname; so he calls him "Squire Levi Hall" (I:103). If Levi was ever any part of his name, his descendants and his tombstone know nothing of it; I have seen them all—the relatives and the tombstone—often, the

last time only a few weeks ago. The tombstone misspells the name "Squier," but there is no "Levi" there. Levi was the deceased father.

Both of the married daughters of Mrs. Lincoln continued to live with their respective husbands in the Lincoln cabin; but Abraham Lincoln had no such companionship with Squire Hall, or with John D. Johnston, who also was there, as he had with Dennis Hanks.

Companions in Work and Play.

Lincoln and Dennis plowed and chopped and frolicked together; they read the same books, which neither Squire nor John cared for. They were the two literary members of the household. They were daily and nightly companions, attending court and religious services and big baptizings and econ hunts together from 1817 till 1830, when they left for Illinois in the same wagon. No other young man began to know Abraham Lincoln as Dennis Hanks knew him.

By the time of the Lincoln-Johnston-Hanks-Hall migration to Illinois, Dennis Hanks and his wife had four children, all born in the Lincoln cabin in Indiana—they had others born later in the Lincoln cabins in Illinois. It is one of the Indiana children, John T. Hanks, whom Beveridge confused with Old John Hanks.

On their arrival in Illinois the men of the party, assisted by John Hanks, who had already cut the logs, put up the Lincoln cabin ten miles from Decatur. They made short work of it, for there were six of them, Thomas and Abraham Lincoln, Dennis and John Hanks, John D. Johnston and Squire Hall. They also plowed and sowed to corn ten or fifteen acres of prairie sod and fenced it in with rails. The fencing fell largely to Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks, and the rails became famous.

Lincoln Leaves Home.

There was no need of Abraham in a home with more than enough manpower. He began to "work out" for himself, and John Hanks went to his own farm. Dennis and John and Squire continued to live with the Lincolns, and a year later moved with them to Coles County, where Thomas erected, in 1832, the home in which he lived till his death, in 1855, and in which his widow remained till her death, in 1869. Dennis developed skill as a shoemaker and moved to Charleston, where he lived for many years. As Lincoln practiced regularly in that county, and one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was held there, Dennis met him frequently.

When Lincoln became a candidate for the Presidency, Dennis was interested, but he did not vote for Lincoln then or in 1864. He was a rock-ribbed Democrat. During the war a riot occurred in Charleston and several men, including a number of soldiers home on leave, were shot. A number of men were imprisoned, among them some relatives of the Hanks family. The friends of these imprisoned men raised a purse and sent Dennis to Washington to intercede with Lincoln in their behalf.

Dennis did not have altogether plain sailing. Lincoln might have

FOR LINCOLN'S SAKE

An Appeal for Support for a Relation of Abraham Lincoln.

Amanda Poorman is the widowed daughter of Dennis Hanks, the cousin, boyhood friend and companion of Abraham Lincoln. She is 68 years of age, and is now, and for the last five years has been housekeeper in the family of J. S. Cunningham, of Mattoon, Ill. During that time she has tenderly nursed the invalid wife of Mr. Cunningham, who for the last two years has been confined, a patient sufferer, to her bed.

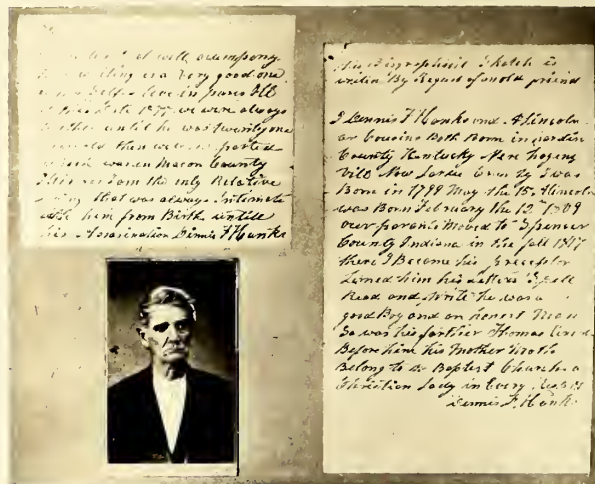
During Lincoln's struggles in early life, and for many years after his tragic death, Dennis Hanks lived at Charleston, the county seat of Coles county, and his humble home was the scene of many a visit from Lincoln, where he was a most welcome guest. In those early days Lincoln wore a pair of pantaloons with two patches where needed most, and Hanks called them Lincoln's spectacled breeches. Mrs. Hanks repaired rents in his clothing, and when she saw him coming would hang an extra pot in the fireplace, for he was a great eater, and was fond of the pioneer dish of mush and milk. Amanda, then a child, gave up her bed and slept upon the floor that Lincoln might have where to rest. Many's the time he sat with the family at the Hanks fireside, and far into the night made jovial the hours with stories and drollery, with Amanda a fascinated listener.

Lincoln's father's home was a log cabin on Goose Nest Prairie, several miles south of Charleston, where Lincoln visited him often when traveling the circuit as a lawyer. The ashes of the pioneer ancestor of the martyr president lie in the little Gordon graveyard, eight miles southeast of Mattoon, marked by a modest marble shaft, erected by means of small contributions from citizens of Coles county, with a hundred dollars from Robert Lincoln.

Lincoln loved and honored this daughter of the family, and to gratify her childish fancy, one time purchased for her the last thing in the world she needed—a brightly colored parasol. It is a pathetic sequel to those pioneer times, that this child friend of the great Lincoln, now at the age of 68 years, is constrained by circumstances to maintain existence by toll and labor as housekeeper in an humble cottage home in this city of Mattoon.

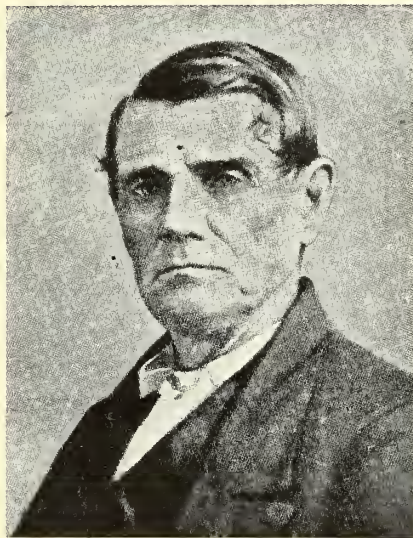
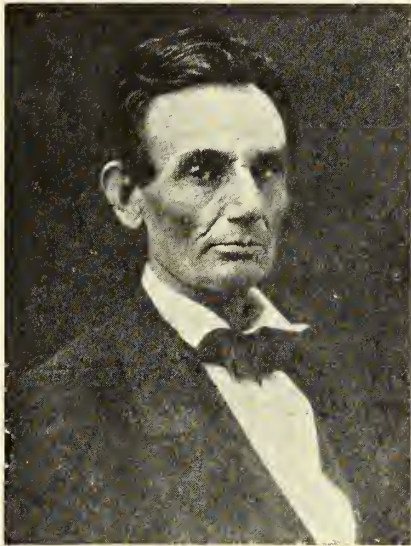
It is believed that the great and generous people of the United States have only to be informed of this fact to open wide their hearts and purse strings, and overwhelm her with their sympathy and support in her declining years. If Amanda slept one night upon the cabin floor that the loved and blessed

Lincoln might refresh his precious life in slumber upon her humble cot, it is enough to entitle her to the gratitude of seventy million people, made glorious, prosperous and happy by his life, labors and martyrdom. Out of their abundance, and in testimony of their love and veneration for his blessed memory, they will pour into her humble life their sympathy and assistance in most generous measure.



DENNIS F. HANKS
Portrait and autobiographical sketch
Photographed for this work

Boston 7-07



ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS COUSIN, DENNIS F. HANKS

THE PROBLEM OF THE HANKS FAMILY.

Dennis H. Hanks wrote to William H. Herndon on April 3, 1866, a biographical and autobiographical letter, the original of which is in the Durrett Collection in the Library of the University of Chicago. In this he says:

"My mother's name was Nancy Hanks. Abe's grandmother was Lucy Hanks, which was my mother's sister. The woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparrow, the sister of Lucy and Nancy. The other sister, her name was Polly Friend. So you see there was ~~ix~~ 4 sisters that was Hankses."

This is in entire agreement with the United testimony of the Hanks family and so far as I am aware was undisputed until ¹⁸⁹⁹ ~~1900~~. Nicolay and Hay summarize the matter thus:

"Mrs. Lincoln's mother was named Lucy Hanks; her sisters were Betty, Polly, and Nancy who married Thomas Sparrow, Jesse Friend, and Levi Hall. The childhood of Nancy was passed with the Sparrows, and she was oftener called by their name than by her own. The whole family connection was composed of people so little given to letters that it is hard to determine the proper names and relationships of the younger members amid the tangle of traditional counsinships." (Life of Lincoln, 1, 24).

So fully did the Hanks family understand what this meant as to the paternity of Nancy Hanks Lincoln that they insisted that she should be called not Hanks but Sparrow. William H. Herndon wrote:

"Dennis Hanks and all the other Hankses, their cousins and relatives, call Nancy Hanks, Nancy Sparrow. Lucy Hanks was her mother. Lucy, the mother of Nancy, married Henry Sparrow. Nancy Hanks was taken and raised by Thomas and Betsy Sparrow. Why did

not her mother, Lucy Sparrow, keep and raise her own daughter? Did Henry Sparrow object to the mother, his wife, keeping on raising her own daughter? Dennis Hanks says to me, this, substantially, (to be quoted word for word) in a letter written by him to me dated Feb. 1866:

"Don't call her Nancy Hanks, because that would make her base-born." (Quoted in Paternity of Abraham Lincoln, p 52).

The will of Joseph Hanks has long been known as existing in Bardetown, Kentucky. I am not aware that it ever was lost as the marriage bond of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln was lost. It is indexed and one of the easily located documents in the Clerk's office. Joseph Hanks made his will January 4, 1793 and it was probated May 14, 1793. In this will he names as his sons Thomas, Joshua, William, Charles and Joseph. To the last of these Joseph he bequeathed the farm of 150 acres upon which at the time of his death he was living. ^{The will} ^{of the elder Joseph Hanks} ~~is~~ named as his daughters, Elizabeth, Polly and Nancy. In 1869 Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock announced with great confidence that the Nancy Hanks named in the will as the daughter of Joseph Hanks was the mother of Abraham Lincoln. The fact that the will contained the names Elizabeth and Polly as well as Nancy ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ was adduced as proof.

Admirers of Abraham Lincoln and his mother have greatly desired and still greatly desire to accept this conjectural identification. I myself am much inclined to it.

But the will of Joseph Hanks makes no mention of Lucy. The united testimony of the Hanks family is that Abraham Lincoln's grandmother was Lucy Hanks.

Although the will of Joseph Hanks was probated in Nelson County, the home of the Hanks family was within the borders of the then new County of Hardin, which had just been created in 1792. The home of Joseph Hanks, being possibly the one on which Joseph Hanks, the father, was living in 1793, when he died, and which he left to his son, Joseph, is believed to have been identified. It lies upon Middle Creek, which divides La Rue County from the present County of Hardin.

The question which has not yet been answered and which ^{there} calls for very careful research is, were two families of Hankses between 1792 and 1806 resident in Hardin, or the near-by County, one having three daughters, Elizabeth or Betsy, Mary or Polly, and Nancy; and the other having four daughters, Elizabeth or Betsy, Mary or Polly, Nancy and Lucy?

So far as I am aware Dennis Hanks did not name the parents of his mother and her sisters, nor state whether they derived their name of Hanks from their father or their mother.

THE HERNDON MANUSCRIPTS

The very generous use of the Herndon manuscripts by the late Senator Beveridge, in his recent publication, has raised again the question of their historical value. The storm which was caused by the discussion of these documents by Lamon, was much more severe than the remonstrance against their release in a later edition by Herndon, himself. When Weik the present owner of the famous collection published, in 1892, "The Real Lincoln," a few murmurings were heard, but little adverse criticism was voiced due to a more conservative interpretation of the documents. It might be said that there has been a more favorable reaction towards these manuscripts with each recurring presentation. If there has been any general disapproval among Lincoln students, of the present effort by Beveridge, it can be traced to his use of the Herndon manuscripts used as source material for the first two chapters of the first volume, covering the parentage of Lincoln and the first twenty one years of his life.

In the preface to the Beveridge work, there is an acknowledgement that, "The largest and most important aid was derived from Mr. Beveridge's friend of long standing, Jesse W. Weik, who is in possession of the Herndon papers. Lamon makes the statement that, "Of all the contributors to Mr. Herndon's store of information, good, bad, and indeliberate, concerning this period of Mr. Lincoln's life, (first twenty-one years) Dennis (Hanks) is the most amusing, insinuating, and prolific."

Mrs. Hitchcock assumed without any known valid proof that the Nancy Hanks named as a daughter in the will of Joseph Hanks was the mother of the President. It was difficult to hold this theory in face of the fact that there already was a Nancy Hanks of that generation, the mother, before marriage, of Dennis Hanks, and subsequently wife of Levi Hall and by him mother of a family of children who knew themselves as half-brothers and ~~was~~ half-sisters of Dennis Hanks. But this difficulty was met by reading legends out of the Hanks family; by providing him a mother, made to order, one Nancy Sparrow, ^{alleged} daughter of Thomas Sparrow (who in reality had no children) and a mythical daughter, among a group of mythical daughters, of Robert Shipley. Into this maze of conjecture and misinformation we need not at present go, but we may pause long enough to refute it.

The simple question involved is, Was Nancy Hanks, the President's mother, the daughter or the grand-daughter of Joseph Hanks, who died in Nelson County, Kentucky, in 1793?

Abraham Lincoln answered this question without knowing that it was ever to rise. In the campaign biography which he wrote in 1860 for John Locke Scripps, which is preserved in manuscript in the Library of Congress, he told of his flat-boat journey to New Orleans in 1831, and of John Hanks as one of his associates. He said:

"He is the same John Hanks who now engineers the 'rail enterprise' at Decatur, and is a first cousin of Abraham's mother."

John Hanks was born at the Falls of Rough in Grayson County, Kentucky, February 9, ~~1802~~ 1802, and died ~~in Illinois~~ July 1st, 1890. He was the son of William and Elizabeth (Hall) Hanks, and the grandson of Joseph and Nancy Hanks. If the President's mother had been a daughter of Joseph Hanks, she would have been, not John Hanks's first cousin, but his aunt.

If this is correct, Dennis Hanks should also have been a first cousin of Nancy Hanks, and this is the information which William H. Herndon obtained from the whole Hanks connection:

"John and Dennis Hanks were both first cousins of Nancy Hanks, and first cousins of each other."

On this question the testimony of Dennis Hanks should have weight. Miss Tarbell says she has no high opinion of Dennis as a genealogist, but all we need to ask of him is that he should know his mother and his cousin apart. Dennis, in a letter written April 2, 1866, gives with precision his relationships:

"My mother and Abe's mother's mother was sisters. My mother's name was Nancy Hanks. Abe's grandmother was Lucy Hanks, which was my mother's sister. The woman that raised me was Elizabeth Sparrow, the sister of Lucy and Nancy. The other sister her name was Polly Friend. So you see there was four sisters that was Hankses.... William Hall ... he is my half brother."

Dennis mentioned William Hall as alive in 1866 and his own half brother. There was another and an older half brother, who was also Dennis's brother in law, for they both married daughters of Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln. Squire Hall died October 5, 1861. We have independent evidence of the Hall family. In 1891, a company was organized to purchase the cabin of Thomas Lincoln in Coles County, Illinois, and set it up in Chicago for exhibit at the World's Fair. This cabin was purchased from John J. Hall, who had been required to make oath as to the genuineness of that and other articles purchased from him by the same company, and to show his relation to Abraham Lincoln. This affidavit, made eight years before Mrs. Hitchcock published her book, contains the following information, attested by the Hall family:

"Abraham Lincoln married, first Nancy Hanks, and as his second wife married Sarah Johnston. Sarah Johnston's maiden name was Sarah Bush, and she married first David (should have been Daniel) Johnston; her second husband was Thomas Lincoln.

"Matilda Johnston, John Johnston Hall's mother, was the youngest daughter of Sarah Johnston, and was step-sister to Abraham Lincoln.

~~San Francisco~~
Harrison Wright
"grandson of Elizabeth Hall Hawks
"grandfather of son Dennis
son of Alice Hawks
Pioneer business takes home
Taught Lincoln surveying

works with in Black Hawk in
Ordville Sargent

~~Sent Lincoln Love to~~
~~Darius State of South~~
~~Capital City~~
~~Board of State~~

Upon the death of the President it is quite natural that biographers would search for some of Lincoln's kinsmen who might be able to throw some light on the ancestry, parentage and early life of the lamented statesman. Inasmuch as Lincoln's stepmother was still living she would be one of the first ones interviewed, but the fact that she did not come into the Lincoln home until ^{contacts with} Abraham was eleven years of age would make ~~some earlier~~ *some members of the family who knew Abraham Lincoln* ~~contacts with the family~~ desirable. *in his boyhood days desirable.*

"Dedatur, Ill., Oct. 2, 1866.

"Ed. State Register - For the past five years there has been no warmer supporter of the administration of Abraham Lincoln than myself. My support of him was to some extent controlled by my knowledge of him. I have known him from his infancy, and was intimately associated with him during his whole career, up to the day of his death. In his school-boy days I was his teacher; and when President, he recognized me as his friend, and as his relation. Knowing him thus intimately, it is but natural that I should know something of his intentions in regard to his sentiment on the grave questions that were submitted to

his control. His whole presidential career was a continued struggle against the recklessness of the radical faction, led by Wade, Butler, Phillips, Greeley, Fred. Douglas, and their confederates, and whenever any movement was inaugurated that promised a speedy overthrow of the rebellion, the radical class imposed upon him conditions before they would pledge their support, ^{or} the support of their representatives in Congress, that compelled him either to sacrifice the country or to yield to their demands. I have private evidence that he was in this way compelled to inaugurate policies that were repugnant to the dictates both of his judgment and his heart. Unfortunately for

the country, at the hour when his power was complete, when he did not require their aid to accomplish the restoration of peace, the hand of an assassin removed him, and prevented him from accomplishing that good he intended.

"Mr. Lincoln was well beloved by the people. Had he lived, the Sputhern States would by this time have been represented in Congress. The radical curs would have barked at his heels, and the whole people would have had confidence in his purity and judgment.

"President Johnson's policy, as now enunciated by

~~by~~ him, would, ere this, have been carried into practical effect by Mr. Lincoln; not because Mr. Lincoln was a greater ^{or} a purer man than President Johnson, but because the people had, during the gloomy years of the dreadful struggle through which we had been passing, reposed confidence in his judgment and his honesty, and the factious partisan lash could not have destroyed his power with the people. I hope that every honest supporter of President Lincoln - every man who fought in the field or who battled at home in behalf of this glorious Union of ours - will not only cast their ballots, but will as well exert all their influence against the miserable combination of

fanatics,charlatans and plunderers, who, under the name
of Union radical party, are now attempting to rob Mr. L
Lincoln of his good name and our country of liberty.

"Yours truly,

"Dennis F. Hanks"

"I have no confidence in Dennis Hanks, Bill Green and some others. They may be correct or may not. The other Hanks - John - I believe in, I think him a good man and a truthful one, but does not always know. He is interested in covering up the general lechery of the Hanks and Lincoln family."

-Herndon Letter to Lamon, Feb. 24, 1869

"In the matter of geneology, etc. character, etc. chastity, etc. of the Hanks-Lincoln-Sparrow family, I am satisfied that John Hanks, nor Dennis Hanks know much about it....Again John and Dennis were very young when they left Kentucky and Indiana especially. John Hanks would state the exact truth - if he knew it. Dennis Hanks would go a mile out of his way to lie."

-Letter to Lamon, Feb. 27, 1870

"Dennis Hanks persists even now in the
assertion that her (Nancy Hanks Lincoln) name was
Sparrow; but Dennis was pitiable weak on cross-
examination." Jan 12

Not used in
Resumé

It would seem safe to assume that Lincoln's
information about the Hankses whether correct or incorrect
was about the same as that gathered by Dennis and John
Hanks, although Lincoln may have been uncertain as to
just how his mother fitted into the picture. Thus it
becomes important to learn if possible just what these
two Hanks' men knew about the Hanks family.

When Scripps wrote to Herndon in 1865 about the interview with Lincoln in which some family history was revealed that the President-elect did not care to have discussed, Scripps mentioned that he did not believe that Dennis Hanks would be likely to say anything about the ~~matter~~ mother. This clue rather implies that the biographical data might have been about the Hanks family. (Lamon, p. 18.)

When Abraham Lincoln was but two years of age his parents moved from the birthplace farm to a tract of land on Knob Creek. They moved out of a community where the Sparrows, Friends, and other kinsmen of the Hankses were then living into a settlement about eight miles from the South Fork neighborhood. By the time Abraham was seven years old the Lincolns had left Kentucky altogether, and by the time Abraham reached nine years of age his mother was dead.

When Mr. Hart in April 1870 wrote his biographical sketch of Mr. Lincoln, he did not comment on Mr. Herndon's statement about Lincoln's mother, but he did call her Nancy Hanks. His collaborator, Mr. Andrew Boyd, however, in a footnote, claimed Lincoln's mother's name was Nancy Sparrow. (Boyd, p. 10.) Apparently Hart was ^{either} not impressed with the accuracy of Herndon's conclusions or felt honor bound to be silent.

~~Herndon then elaborated further on Lincoln's own illegitimacy and claimed that the Chicago Times had "the bad side of these facts."~~ He then asked Hart to keep what he had told him a "dead secret."

One's confidence in the dependability ^{of all} of William Herndon's statements is greatly shaken after reading the Hertz volume containing copies of Herndon's collection of correspondence, folklore and tradition, in which he is found continually contradicting himself. It now appears as if the accusations brought against him at the time his famous three volume work appeared are in some instances justifiable. Here is an excerpt from a letter in the ^{files of the} Lincoln National Life Foundation written in 1895 to a gentleman in Boston by L. E. Chittenden, Register of the Treasurer in Lincoln's administration: "I beg to caution you that the first five pages of Herndon's life are libels.

It is infamous that such a coarse, scandal-loving brute should be permitted to publish such palpable falsehoods of a great and beautiful character." This seems like rather harsh language but no more so than certain comments on the contents of letters which ^{Herndon} ~~he~~ wrote and ^{which are} ~~now~~ made ^{of recent months} ~~available~~ ^{to the} public. How would Mr. Chittenden and his contemporaries react toward the compilation of Herndon's correspondence ~~now~~ made available in ~~print~~ ^{a book of wide circulation published in 1938.}

It must be admitted that many of the most widely recognized authorities on the life of Abraham Lincoln still ~~live~~ hold to this tradition and doubtless they will object to the story of Lincoln's mother's origin being placed among the Lincoln myths. Attacking the problem from the viewpo nt of a documentary historian, however, it does not seem that available records support the ~~thesis~~ ^{premise} that Lincoln's mother was born out of wedlock. ~~But the story has been given wide publicity. Dr. H. E. Barton contributed more to its general circulation than any other recent historian through his many monographs on the subject. In the summer of 1939 the American Magazine prepared a feature~~

There have been several attempts made to discover the identity of this unknown Virginian. Lucinda Boyce in her book published in 1899 presents Chief Justice John Marshall as the maternal great grandfather of Abraham Lincoln. She makes affidavit that her father told her. "Nancy, Lincoln's mother, was the child of Lucy Hanks, Hornback, or Sparrow, and a son of Judge John Marshall (Chief Justice) of Virginia." Mrs. Boyd claimed that Lucy died in Virginia and later Nancy went to Kentucky." (Boyd, p. 47.)

A more interesting supposition was suggested by Dr. Barton and immediately accepted by the Nancy Hanks memorial commission appointed by Governor Conley of West Virginia. Their printed conclusions prepared by the chairman of the commission, Mr. Price, holds Abraham Lincoln, mother to have been the daughter of George Washington. ()

pre-print of an article which emphasized the illegitimacy of Abraham Lincoln's mother, and scarcely a biography of Lincoln appears which does not accept the story as factual. It is evident that the primary purpose of the maternal ancestry myth is to provide for Abraham Lincoln, through his maternal grandfather those unusual qualifications with which the President was intellectually endowed.

The earliest major myth is associated with Lincoln's own origin which has resulted in the publication of many monographs on the question of his paternity. A book of nearly three hundred pages appeared as late as 1940 which attempted to show Lincoln was an illegitimate child of German-Scotch parentage. Supplementing the paternity traditions a myth began to take form based on the theory that Thomas Lincoln, father of the President, was a worthless individual and incapable of contributing anything worthwhile to his son.

The mother of Lincoln

The testimony of Dennis Hanks is most severely questioned when he attempts to give some information about the Hanks family tree. Granted that he should be able to speak with a little more authority about the family of his own mother than about the family of Abraham Lincoln's father. ~~It is~~ it is just here that Dr Barton Dennis that in all the details but one he is

absolutely correct but that in just one instance he "waded knee-deep in falsehood" and "lied like a gentleman" Sumner + Herndon. And Beveridge all agree that he deliberately set out to falsify the parentage of Nancy Hanks by calling her Nancy Sparrow, yet in every other instance the story he told about the Hanks relationships were true. The following writing by Dennis illustrates how closely Herndon questioned Dennis about the ~~the~~ parentage of Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks ~~Lin~~ or Nancy Sparrow as Dennis called her.

The name of Dennis Hanks ~~first~~
appears in *Chicago's Pioneer* July publisher in
1863 where he is set forth as Lincoln's instructor
in writing. Hanks was not pleased as a whole
with ~~the~~ ^{his} work although he evidently relied much
upon it to bolster up his own ~~reputation~~ ^{reputation} of the
Kimbrey deep.

The politicians did not overlook Dennis
Hanks any more than they did John and
Charles Hanks as revealed in the last issue of
the *Kinsmen*. The Illinois State Register of October
4 1866 ~~does a long work a long letter~~
printed a long letter signed by Dennis Hanks
but evidently not composed by him in which
he ~~expressed~~ ^{hoped} ~~that~~ the friends of Lincoln; —

— "will not only cast their Ballots, but will exert all their influence against the miserable combination of fanatics, charlatans and plunderers, who, under the name of the Union radical party, are now attempting to rob Mr. Lincoln of his good name and our country of liberty."

It was in January 1889 when Eleanor Atkinson
visited Dennis Hanks and he was then ninety years old
yet she received enough information from Dennis to
write a book on The Boyhood of Lincoln. It is this book
which has popularized the story of Dennis Hanks visit
to the Lincoln cabin when Abraham was born. and many
other bits of untimable folk lore.

Possibly one of the last persons to
interview Dennis Hanks was Eleanor
Gridley who visited him when he was ninety-
two years of age and living with his
daughter Mrs Nancy Schooff at Paris, Ill.
Mrs Gridley was so impressed with the
disparaging way Dennis spoke about
Mr Lincoln that she later put the question
to one of the relatives, "Did not Dennis
Hanks ever speak kindly or admiringly of
Mr Lincoln?" It was their opinion that he
had been more generous in his attitude towards Lincoln
earlier in life.

D Banks to Hamilton Jan 24 1866

John " " June 13 1865

Hanks charterer returned with

Hanks just died, Hilbert

Mrs P. A. Hanaford in her life
of Abraham Lincoln published in 1865
states that Thomas Lincoln "in 1806
married Miss Nancy Sparrow, who was
a native of Virginia." (Hanaford p 10)

